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39.

1042.

# NATIONAL

# CHURCH ESTABLISHMENTS

## EXAMINED.

LONDON:—RICHARD CLAY, PRINTER,
BREAD STREET HILL.

# NATIONAL

# CHURCH ESTABLISHMENTS

EXAMINED:

A

## COURSE OF LECTURES,

DELIVERED IN LONDON,

DURING APRIL AND MAY MDCCCXXXIX.

BY

RALPH WARDLAW, D.D.

LONDON:
JACKSON AND WALFORD,
18, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.
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1839.

1042.

AT a Meeting of "The Committee of Deputies from "the several Congregations of Protestant Dissenters "of the Three Denominations, Presbyterian, Inde- "pendent, and Baptist, in and within twelve miles "of London, appointed to protect their Civil Rights," held at the King's Head Tavern, in the Poultry, on Friday, May 3d, 1839,

HENRY WAYMOUTH, ESQ. IN THE CHAIR,

IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED,—

"That in consequence of the course of Lectures, in favour of Church Establishments, read last year in London by the Rev. Dr. Chalmers, and subsequently published,—this Committee were induced to invite the Rev. Ralph Wardlaw, D. D. of Glasgow, also to deliver a course in the Metropolis, in vindication of their principles, and for public information on a subject so truly important. That such course, constituting the annexed Volume, having been delivered to numerous, respectable, and most attentive assemblies, this Committee cordially express their admiration of the arrangement of the subjects—the comprehensiveness of the topics—the accumulated information presented—the happy discrimination of the arguments—the logical and unanswerable refutation of DR. CHALMERS, and other opponents—the exposition and defence of the Voluntary Principle—the luminous and eloquent style in which they were expressed—the scriptural basis on which the whole superstructure was reared—and peculiarly of

the courteous yet unflinching temper always evinced, and the christian charity blended with high and fixed determination uniformly displayed. And that this Committee present their assurances of gratitude and regard to Dr. Wardlaw for his great and honourable labours, and anticipate from the extensive circulation of the Lectures a new and decisive victory to truth; and, by the divine blessing, a permanent harvest of satisfactory and beneficial results."

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# INTRODUCTION.

ERE I enter on the field before me, I wish to offer, very briefly, two or three preliminary statements.

*First*:—I feel as if I needed, not a little, to deprecate the charge of presumption. The position which I now occupy, is one to which I never should have thought of offering myself. But that may be justly chargeable with self-sufficient forwardness, when done at the spontaneous suggestion of a man's own mind, which assumes the aspect of imperative duty, when undertaken at the solicitation of others. I was instantly and strongly sensible, that an invi-

tation from a quarter of such weight and respectability was not to be slighted,—that the desire of so many of my esteemed fellow-servants might be fairly construed into an indication of the will of my divine Master,—and that, by declining compliance, I might expose myself to the imputation of a recreant unfaithfulness to what I believed to be the truth of God, and thus to a consequence still more to be dreaded, the rebuke of the God of truth.

*Secondly*:—The following Lectures are constructed upon the plan of connecting the notice, and interweaving the discussion, of general principles on the great questions at issue, with a reply to the statements and reasonings of Dr. Chalmers. This plan I adopted, on mature reflection, as, on the whole, more eligible than the contrary method, of taking up, according to any independent arrangement of my own, the general subject, and giving a place, under its different heads, to the representations and arguments of that distinguished person;—to whom, as well as to my cause, I was solicitous to do no injustice.

*Thirdly*:—Having, in occasional sermons, lectures, and speeches, given my views to the public

on particular branches of this "great argument," I was at first somewhat embarrassed respecting the use which I might be warranted to make of these previous publications. To have shunned the topics on which I had already written, or the reasonings by which the views given of them had been supported, would have been to leave out some things which, on an occasion like the present, required to be even prominently introduced;—and I am satisfied an apology is hardly necessary for having, at times, although as sparingly as possible, availed myself of the contents of these ephemeral productions.

*Fourthly:* — If, in these Lectures, I have but seldom referred to the writings of those of my brethren, whether in the South or in the North, who, during the last few years, have advocated the same side of the question with myself, the conclusion from this would be very wide of the truth, that I entertained a low estimate either of their intrinsic merits, or of the amount of influence they have exerted, in the present controversy, on the progress of those views which I believe to have the sanction of divine authority. It is very far otherwise. The truth is, — I was aware of the

difficulty, on such a subject, of discriminating sentiments peculiar to one writer from such as were common to him with others; and I felt it, in all respects, better, to disencumber myself of frequent references, and to follow out freely the train of my own thoughts.

# LECTURE I.

GENERAL POSITIONS — DEFINITION AND ILLUSTRATION OF TERMS — ECCLESIASTICAL ESTABLISHMENTS — VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE.

In the series of Lectures in support of Civil Establishments of Christianity, delivered in this metropolis, by the Rev. Dr. Chalmers, in the spring of last year, the eminent, and on many grounds deservedly eminent, lecturer, introduced his subject with some observations on the consistency, in the great work of evangelizing mankind, between the use of appropriate means and dependence for success on divine influence. The principles which, on that subject, he lays down, are such as meet the concurrent assent of all Christians. Of the piety of any who are disposed to question them, he was quite warranted to speak as "unintelligent" and "drivelling," however "sincere" and "strong."— In all, indeed, that he says on this subject, we have the happiness to be one with him. We share not at all in that antipathy to the use of means, of which he so largely exposes the folly, drawing his varied illustrations of their obligation and necessity in the department of religion, from "all the analogies of nature and providence." We join issue with him in the sentiment, that "there is nothing

in the doctrine of the Spirit's agency which should foreclose the question, which still remains to us in all its importance, of the best polity, or the best platform, for a Church upon earth:"—that "while we acknowledge the celestial descent, we must not neglect the territorial distribution." We admit at once, to the full extent of his statements, that the question is one entirely of means and agencies; not regarding the grace or the promises of God, but regarding the duty of man. In a future lecture we shall inquire, how far the assumption has its foundation in truth, that the choice of these means and agencies "*remains with us*," as a question to be determined by our own views of fitness and expediency. Our only complaint at present is, that, by the introduction of such topics at the very outset of his discussion, an impression might be made on the public mind, as if those who, on the subject of that discussion, stood on the opposite side from himself, were holding a principle different from that which he advocates, and, in their hostility to establishments, were, theoretically or practically, denying the necessity of means for the maintenance and extension of Christianity. Now, on this point, I repeat, there is no question between the contending parties. The inquiry relates, not to the use of means, but to the *nature of the means to be used;* —the phrase being understood as involving the sources from which they are to be drawn, and the agency by which they are to be applied. In one word, the great question is—*Whether the provision and application of means for the support and*

*propagation of religion, be a duty incumbent on the state, or the civil Government of a country,* — or *whether it should be left exclusively to the zeal and liberality of the christian church.*

Such is the question respecting the claims to preference of ESTABLISHMENTS on the one hand, and the VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE on the other. We may see hereafter, how far, and in what ways, opposite opinions on this question affect, and are affected by, the views of their respective supporters regarding the nature of the kingdom of Christ, or the New Testament Church. Our present business is one which, in every controversy, is of first-rate importance—the definition of terms, in order to our having a clear understanding of what we are debating about. On this preliminary department of our subject, we should not have felt it needful to dwell so much at large, had it not been for the sake of removing misconceptions, especially as to the nature and operation of the Voluntary Principle, involved in the representations given of it by Dr. Chalmers.

The inquiry, then, which must first engage our attention is — What is an *Ecclesiastical Establishment,*—or, in more strictly appropriate terms, a *civil* or *national establishment of religion?* Many such establishments have existed; and there has been amongst them no inconsiderable diversity. Must every one of them be taken up by itself, and judged by its own merits, arising out of its own peculiarities? — or can we discover any ingredient, or ingredients, common to them all, and which may

be considered as constituting their generic and essential character?

According to Dr. Chalmers, the question is very briefly answered; his definition of an Establishment being as short and simple as could well be wished. "We should assume," says he, "as the "basis of our definition for a religious establish- "ment, or as the essential property by which to "characterise it—a sure legal provision for its mini- "strations:"—"Wherever we have a certain legal "provision for the ministrations of Christianity, "there we have an establishment of Christianity in "the land:"—"It is this which forms the essence of "an Establishment, and, as such, must be singled "out from all the other accessories wherewith it "may happen to be variegated."

We entirely agree with Dr. C. in conceiving this legal provision to be essential to an Establishment; —a *state-established* church to be essentially a *state-endowed* church. A visionary fancy has, indeed, been entertained, of a possible connexion between the church and the state, where there is no state endowment. "It is quite possible," it has been said, "that the state, or the supreme civil rulers, "on becoming christian, and considering the duty "which they owe to religion and to the church, may "see it incumbent upon them to establish the church, "by giving it the sanction or countenance of civil "authority; or, what is substantially the same thing, "giving it a public official declaration of their appro- "bation and good-will; while, at the same time, the "situation of the church may be such as to render

"a state endowment unnecessary." I know not whether such a representation of the case might not be taken from the fact as it existed in the days of Constantine. When that emperor took the christian church under his patronage, he did not endow it with any state property. The resources of the church at the time arising from the operation (the superstitiously abused and unworthily stimulated operation, let it be allowed) of the voluntary principle, were such as, in the terms just cited, to "render a state endowment unnecessary." But although the Establishment of Constantine was, in this sense, without an endowment, it had what was tantamount to it, namely, the imperial and legal appropriation to it of its existing revenues. He assumed over the church an absolute supremacy, in all that related to its external constitution. Among other things, he legalized its property, subjecting it, that is, to the imperial will; so that what had before been obtained and held as voluntary benefaction, came now to be held by a new and very different tenure. The emperor legislated for the church,—we may afterwards see with how arbitrary a sway; and, in the very act of securing to it its possessions by the bond of law, exercised a jurisdiction over them such as implied his regarding them as at his own disposal. From the arbitrary character of the imperial government, it cannot be doubted, that he did, in this matter, not so much what, by right and justice, he felt himself bound to do, as what his sovereign will dictated; so that, had he considered the property of the church as excessive, he would,

without scruple of conscience, have diminished it, or, if deficient, would have augmented it;—that he took the possessions of the church under his control, when he took the church itself under his protection. By chartering those possessions, or giving the church a legal right to them, he imparted to them the proper character of an endowment, according to Dr. Chalmers's definition of it—"a sure legal provision."

I certainly need not dwell on the absurdity of identifying the mere "public official declaration of *approbation and good will*" with the "sanction or countenance of *civil authority*." Civil authority, if it is any thing at all, is the authority of *coercion*: it is the power of the sword. The folly, the wickedness, and the mischief, of introducing the exercise of such authority in matters of religion, we may hereafter have occasion to expose. Meanwhile we cannot but regard it as a very harmless thing, were the head of the state to issue a proclamation declaratory to all his subjects of his preference of one system of doctrine, or one mode of worship and ecclesiastical discipline, to another,—provided no exclusive rights and privileges were annexed to the approved faith and order, but all the lieges were left at liberty to choose for themselves, without advantage on the one hand or forfeiture on the other, whether they would have the honour of being of the court religion, or, judging of the mind and will of God for themselves, follow out the dictates of an enlightened conscience. To designate such a proclamation an Establishment,

is an abuse of terms. It must be something more substantial, for which the zeal of churchmen would deem it worth while to contend, or which could array against it any combined and indignant phalanx of dissent. We might question—we might deny—the propriety of any such proclamation in favour of one system more than another of religious doctrine and worship, that should bear at all an official character; yet if proclamation were all, fighting for it, and fighting against it, would be little better, on either side, than "beating the air." Unprivileged—unendowed—unassociated with any benefit beyond the mere honour of conformity to courtly fashion,—what would *such* an establishment avail? To deal in suppositions of this kind; to imagine connexions between the church and the state, such as never existed, and such as really would amount to little or nothing if they did exist; is useless speculation, or disingenuous trifling. It is not grappling manfully with the question, but weakly and unworthily evading it.

It is rather curious, and not uninteresting or uninstructive, to observe, how the representations of an establishment on the part of its advocates, have gradually dwindled from loftier and more complex, to humbler and more simple forms. The extending prevalence of more correct and liberal views on the great subjects of religious liberty and the rights of conscience, has naturally given rise to this; so that that which is now contended for, and with which many at least of the friends of establishments are fain to satisfy themselves, can hardly at

times be recognised as the same thing with what engaged of old the high-toned advocacy of ecclesiastics, in the full flush of a haughty and hardly-questioned supremacy. Times are changed. What a reduction, in the principles themselves, and in the tone with which they are maintained, is apparent in the comparison between the Warburtonian "alliance" and the Chalmerian "legal provision!" In the former, as might have been anticipated from the lofty and uncompromising character of its author, the highest ground is taken. It is different from that which had been occupied by the justly distinguished oracle of English Episcopacy—Hooker. From the state in which the manuscripts were left, from which the later books of the Ecclesiastical Polity were, after his death, compiled, it is hardly doing that great man justice to regard their contents as his fully matured and accurately digested views. One thing, however, is clear, that, following apparently the Hebrew model, he considered the state and the church as, in regard to the persons of whom they were constituted, the same; one society, contemplated under different aspects, possessing different properties and relations, discharging different functions, and from such accidental diversities deriving its different designations of a *Commonwealth* or a *Church;* all who belong, as subjects, to the former, belonging also, as members, to the latter; the commonwealth, regarded ecclesiastically, being the church—and the church, regarded politically, the commonwealth. Of this one society, under both its cha-

racters, the King is the common head; the head of the state and the head of the church being simply the head of the nation, politically and ecclesiastically considered; KING and HEAD, different designations of the supreme authority, corresponding to the different designations of the same community over which the authority extends;—King, when considered under its political,—Head, when considered under its ecclesiastical character;—the authority in both being held by the same *jure divino* tenure, and in both implying a universal superintendence, and a universal *veto*.

From this view of the identity of the state and the church, Warburton dissents. In his theory, the two, whatever be their personal elements, are contemplated as distinct societies or institutions, with distinct and independent provinces and powers. The connexion between them is, in his own words, "a politic league and alliance, for mutual support and defence." The two contracting parties are regarded, previously to their convention, as being each alike sovereign and independent, holding, in its own department, its own prerogatives, without being at all amenable to the other. But each, in its own sphere, feels its need of the other's aid; and both, for the sake of mutual benefit, agree to enter into compact, with an equal right to make, respectively, their own stipulations. Each has its peculiar province:—the care of civil society extending only to the body and its concerns; and the care of religious society, with similar exclusiveness, to the soul; and, from "a sense of mutual wants to

be supplied, and mutual benefits to be gained by it," this "free convention and mutual compact" is formed;—"the state, not having the care of souls, and unable, therefore, of itself, to enforce the influence of religion, seeking aid of the church;—and the church, having no coercive power (the consequence of its care not extending to bodies) as naturally flying for protection to the state." The object of the league, therefore, is, avowedly, to supply to each what it is supposed specially to want;—that the state, by its alliance with the church, may have the power of applying religion to civil purposes;—and that the church, by its alliance with the state, may provide for its own support and security.

In this compact there is, to a stipulated extent, a mutual surrender of rights, and concession of powers:—the state having a share, allowed by the church, in the ecclesiastical administration; and the church a share, allowed by the state, in the civil administration; for the safety of the interests of each, and the advancement of the benefit of both:—the power yielded by the state to the church preventing, by the presence and influence of ecclesiastical representatives in the legislative body, the encroachment of the former on the stipulated rights and privileges of the latter; and the power conceded by the church to the state restraining ecclesiastical ambition from usurping the prerogatives of the former, and ensuring, by means of royal supremacy and a certain amount of patronage, the application of religion to the support of

good government—(that is, however finely sounding the phrase may be in the abstract, invariably of the government which at the time is dominant)—and the inculcation of loyal allegiance and of peaceful and dutiful submission upon the people.

I have called this the highest ground, from which there has been a gradual descent. In so representing it, I had respect to the magnificence of the theory. There is a grandeur in the conception of two co-ordinate powers thus entering into league —offensive and defensive—adjusting mutual rights, fixing boundaries,—and, each in the exercise of its own independence, reciprocally conceding and accepting the terms of a covenant. But, in another point of view, I ought perhaps to modify my statement. In regard to *ecclesiastical independence*, there is more of loftiness in Chalmers than in Warburton. How far this loftiness is justified by either the reason or the facts of the case, is another question, to which due attention may be paid hereafter. At present, I speak simply of his theory. He seems hardly to admit the two contracting parties to be co-ordinate, or to have equal rights of stipulation; for he affirms the obligation of the state to help the church,—to maintain and extend it to the uttermost,—while he reiterates the assertion of the church's continued independence — absolute and unqualified—of the state.

While we must reserve the fuller discussion of this point to a future lecture, it is necessary to observe here, that in all such assertions there is a manifest illusion. The illusion arises from con-

founding the church considered *abstractly* with the church considered *as established.* To the church, regarded in itself, we cheerfully grant, there are no terms that can be condemned as excessive in the assertion of her independence,—her independence, I of course mean, of all earthly authority. In all that has been said, or that can be said, on this point, we voluntaries more than acquiesce. It is for this independence that we make our stand. It is because we would not have it, in any way, or in any measure, qualified, that we disown and resist the church's establishment by the state; for it is clear as day, that such establishment involves, and must involve, a qualifying of this independence. The church, considered in itself, was founded, and its constitution given, by the supreme authority of its only Head. That authority was exercised through his inspired vicegerents, the twelve Apostles; and with the constitution of the Redeemer's kingdom, as originally settled by that authority, no power on earth ever had, has now, or ever can have, a right to interfere. But the Church, *as established,* is evidently in very different circumstances. Under this aspect, it owes its existence to certain acts of state legislation. It is by virtue of such acts alone, that an established church can have a being. Even taking it under its simplest form, — that of Dr. Chalmers's "sure legal provision,"—it is obvious, that the very stipulation of such a provision involves a bargain, and this bargain conditions. The state offers to take the professors of a particular religious creed under its special patronage, — to legalize and secure their existing

corporate property, if there be any,—to provide the necessary funds if there be not,—and to augment them, as need may arise. The professors of that creed accept the conditions. But in the very act of accepting them, they qualify their independence. They have agreed to a bargain; and the terms of that bargain they are bound to fulfil. The state, in contracting to supply the funds, has of course a right to fix the creed and the forms of worship and ecclesiastical discipline, to the maintenance of which these funds are to be appropriated; and by the legislative enactment of the state they are fixed accordingly. From the moment of such a contract, all high-minded vauntings of independence must cease. If the church persists in saying—We have still a right—an unsurrendered and indefeasible right—to alter our creed and our formularies of worship and discipline as we please; the answer is plain:—*As a church*, you have the right; but *as an established church*, you have not. You *may* do it; but you cannot do it independently. You cannot do it, without the concurrence of the other contracting party. If you do it without that concurrence, you are chargeable with a breach of faith; and by the very act, you forfeit your title to state patronage, and state support, and all that constitutes you an established church. The conditional surrender of independence we conceive to be as necessarily involved in the very idea of an establishment, even when viewed in its simplest possible aspect, as it is in the case of a private engagement, when a man, in return for a stipulated hire, agrees to per-

form a certain work in a certain way. If he either fails to do the work, or foists a surreptitious alteration into the terms of his contract, and does it in a way of his own, different from what that contract, in its original form, had prescribed, he forfeits, on principles of the plainest equity, all his title to the remuneration. He has broken faith. He was not independent. He was bound to have the concurrence of his employer, ere he ventured on any innovation.

In confirmation of the views just given, I avail myself, without comment, of the authority of a man of no ordinary clearness and vigour of intellect, and of high eminence in his day, in the Scottish Establishment:—"There are two general points respecting the authority of the state in matters of religion," says the late Principal Hill of St. Andrews, "which are implied in the idea of a Religious Establishment. —First, the civil magistrate is entitled to know the opinions of the community of Christians to whom he imparts the benefits of an Establishment. He adopted that community in preference to others, from the knowledge which he then had of their tenets; and if they were to embrace opinions essentially different, he might see cause to withdraw that preference. Hence, confessions of faith,—which, ecclesiastically considered, are an exposition of the truth prepared by the society of teachers to direct their own ministrations, and to warn the people against error,—become a declaration to the state of the opinions and principles held by the ministers of the established religion; and subscription to confessions or articles of religion, is a solemn pledge to

the civil magistrate, that they will not, without his knowledge, make any change upon that system of doctrine which had received his sanction. Accordingly, divers acts of parliament enjoin, that every person who administers the word and sacraments in the Church of England, shall openly subscribe the Thirty-nine Articles; and at the revolution, the same acts of parliament which settled Presbyterian Church-government in Scotland, ordain, that no person be admitted or continued hereafter to be a minister or preacher within this Church, unless that he subscribe the confession of faith, declaring the same to be the confession of his faith.

"Secondly, the civil magistrate is entitled to take care that the established church does her duty, and that none of her regulations and acts disturb the public peace. The form of the religious establishment generally provides some mode of exercising this superintending power. In one of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, it is declared, that the synods and councils, where those regulations and orders which may affect the public tranquillity are enacted, shall not be gathered together without the commandment of the princes: and the Church of Scotland, in her Confession of Faith, declares what, in effect, comes to the same thing, that the civil magistrate has power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God. It will always be the wish of every person, who understands the true interests of the community, to avoid even the appearance of

a collision between the powers of the church and the state; but if the church derive essential benefit from the state, it is agreeable to common sense and common equity, that there should be some mode in which that supreme power, which is the guardian of the whole community, may be exerted, as circumstances shall require, in order to prevent the church, which is a part of the community, from neglecting those duties for the sake of which she enjoys protection and favour, or from exercising her rights in a manner which appears hurtful to the state."*

This sounds very much like reason and good sense; and it is quite in harmony with the representations of a more recent writer, on the same side of the question, but belonging to the Southern Establishment. Mr. Gladstone thus writes:—"It is impossible, in point of fact, that any other basis could be adopted, than one which gives the state a *veto* on changes in the church. The church allies herself with the state, in consideration of advantages accorded to her, which are accorded in respect of her peculiar constitution as a church, and which would cease to be due, if she violated that constitution. Therefore, the state must have the means of observing all her movements, judging what change is violation, and interposing the *veto*, which means simply,—'If you do so, you must no longer enjoy civil advantages.'"†

* Hill's Theol. Instit. pp. 150—153.

† The State, in its Relations with the Church, p. 120.—The same reasonable position is also taken by a critic in the

Having thus mentioned Mr. Gladstone, I may be pardoned for adverting here, very briefly, to his theory of Establishments, and to that of Mr. Coleridge, as the two most recently given to the world. —The former bases his theory on an idea of *national personality*. The nation, as a nation, must be morally responsible for its acts. In order to such national responsibility, there must be a national conscience. This national conscience cannot be found in the millions of separate units of which the population of the country is composed. There must be a national personality; and this requisite to responsibility is found, representatively, in the nation's governor, or "governing body." The governing body is an impersonation of the state; and this fictitious person "is bound in its capacity as such, to profess and maintain a religion, according to its conscience, both as being composed of individuals, who have individual responsibilities to discharge, and individual purposes to fulfil, and as being itself, collectively, the seat of a national personality, with national respon-

last number of the Quarterly Review, under the article, "Oxford Theology." — "Nothing is more alarming than the present position of the church in regard to the state. The church has its commission, its constitution, its authority, its legislative power, its functions, its duties, from God, not man. It is not created, nor can it be destroyed, by any power upon earth. But it has accepted an office in the state; or rather, the state has permitted it to exercise its own office of educating the people, and consecrating the fabric of society. In so doing, the state must assume a certain right of interference; necessary not only to prevent a corrupt church trespassing on the civil power, but also to check the tendency to corruption in the church itself, by, in some degree, limiting its independence," &c.

sibilities to discharge, and national purposes to fulfil." This becomes the representative conscience and religion of the nation. "Wherever there is a reasoning agency, there is a moral duty, and a responsibility involved in it:—the governors are reasoning agents for the nation in their conjoint acts as such. And, therefore, there must be attached to this agency, as that without which none of our responsibilities can be met, a religion. And this religion must be that of the conscience of the governor, or none." According to this theory, the national religion is the religion of the governing body, not as individuals merely, but in their united official capacity, as the organ and personation of the community. This governing body chooses, establishes, endows, professes, and recommends the religion.

With Mr. Gladstone's views respecting the unity of the church, and the figment of "apostolical succession" as the only true element of that unity, I have at present nothing to do.—I may be allowed, indeed, to express my astonishment, that he, or that any man, should find the characteristic mark of the church's identity, and the necessary nucleus of the church's cohesion, in this traditionary imposition of hands, traced through channels so unsatisfactory and precarious; and should regard the test of the true apostolical church of Christ as, consequently, lying, not in the preaching of the apostolical gospel by its ministers, nor in the maintenance of apostolical discipline amongst its members, but, amidst a melancholy deficiency of

both, in the imaginary derivation from the apostles of a sacred character, by the equally imaginary regularity with which the mere *opus operatum* of the form of consecration has been conveyed, through successive official generations, from head to head; a form to which others than Mr. Gladstone, pushing the principle to its ultimate extravagance, have imputed the most extraordinary virtues; the very breath that passes through duly consecrated lips, deriving from it the power, by a peculiar species of spiritual chemistry, of neutralizing the deadly virus of error, and imparting to it the vital and health-giving influences of truth!* — But at present

* "But if a sermon differ from what a gospel sermon should be, men will determine that Christ could have had nothing to do with its delivery. Now this, we assert, is nothing less than the deposing Christ from the ministry assigned him in our text." (Heb. viii. 2. "A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man.") "We are far enough from declaring that the Chief Minister puts the false words into the mouth of the inferior. But we are certain, as upon a truth which to deny is to assault the foundations of Christianity, that the Chief Minister is so mindful of his office, that every man, who listens in faith, expecting a message from above, shall be addressed through the mouth, aye, *even through the mistakes and errors*, of the inferior. And in upholding this truth, a truth attested by the experience of numbers, we simply contend for the accuracy of that description of Christ which is under review. If, wheresoever the minister is himself deficient and untaught, so that his sermons exhibit *a wrong system of doctrine*, you will not allow that Christ's church may be profited by the ordinance of preaching; you clearly argue, that the Redeemer has given up his office, and that he can no longer be styled the 'minister of the true tabernacle.' There is no middle course between denying that Christ is the minister, and allowing that, *whatever the faulty statements of his ordained servant*, no soul, which is hearkening in faith for a word of counsel

I speak solely of his theory of what constitutes a national religion. And as to it, I satisfy myself with only one observation, and then leave it to such future reference as may happen to be made to it, and to its place in the general conclusion to which these Lectures are designed to lead. The theory may be fine in the principle of it, and may recommend itself to the pious mind as investing national acts with a national sanctity: —

or comfort, shall find the ordinance worthless, and be sent empty away.

" And from this we obtain our first illustration of our text. We behold the true followers of Christ enabled to find food in pastures which seem barren, and water where the fountains are dry. They obtain, indeed, the most copious supplies,—though perhaps even this will not always hold good,—when the sermons breathe nothing but truth, and the sacraments are administered by men of tried piety and faith. But when every thing seems against them, so that, on a carnal calculation, you would suppose the services of the church stripped of all efficacy, then, by acting faith on the Head of the ministry, they are *instructed and nourished; though, in the main, the given lesson be falsehood, and the proffered sustenance little better than poison.* And if Christ be thus always sending messages to those who listen for his voice; if he so take upon himself the office of preacher, as to constrain even the tongue of error,"—(that is, observe, not the tongue of error " constrained," like that of Balaam, to *speak truth*, but the tongue of error *actually uttering error*,)—" to speak instruction to his people;" &c. (*Melvill's Sermons*, Vol. I. Sermon II.) On the same principle it may be presumed, that the sacramental bread and wine, were the one kneaded up and the other saturated with arsenic, would, by the circumstance of their being administered by duly consecrated hands, be deprived of their deadly tendencies, and rendered harmless and salutary to the body; even as error, by passing through duly consecrated lips, is bereft of its deleterious influence on the soul. I offer no comment. To argue such a point would be hopeless. " He who is able to receive it, let him receive it."—The *italics* in the above extract are mine.

but it is a *theory only*. In its practical working, it is worse than null; it is pregnant with delusion and mischief. It introduces a distinction between *personal* and *official* religion, which cannot fail of a most pernicious operation. It is not pretended—for in such a world, and with a hereditary monarchy and peerage too, the thing can never be—that the members of the governing body must always be men of real personal godliness; and yet, without that, what is the religion of office? I know of no official religion deserving of the name, but the personal religion of the man transfusing its influence into the discharge of his official functions. All else but this is not religion; it is hypocrisy. I cannot allow the two terms to stand as convertible. In men, who are not themselves religious, their external profession, and conformity to certain rites and modes of worship, becomes, not the representative *religion*, but the representative *hypocrisy* of the nation. If the religion of the nation must be that of the governing body or none, I fear it must, with whatever regret and sorrow, be admitted, that in this our christian country there has far oftener been none than any.

One is at a loss under what category to place the "national clerisy" of Mr. Coleridge.* It is an establishment, certainly; and a national establishment. But it is not an establishment of the church. The church of Christ, according to him, has nothing to do with it. I could not, for myself, desire a clearer

* See his "Church and State," with the Prefatory Summary and Remarks of its editor.

or simpler statement than is given by him, of the entirely distinct and independent subsistence of the christian church. In the terms of the correct summary of his views by his editor,—" According to him, the christian church is not a kingdom or realm of this world, nor a member of any such kingdom or realm; it is not opposed to any particular state, in the large or narrow sense of that word; it is in no land national, and the national reserve" (that is, the reserved fund for the maintenance of the clerisy) " is not entrusted to its charge. It is, on the contrary, the opposite to the world only; the counterforce to the evils and defects of states, as such, in the abstract,—asking of any particular state neither wages nor dignities, but demanding protection, that is, to be let alone:"—" the christian church is a public and visible community, having ministers of its own, whom the state can neither constitute nor degrade, and whose maintenance amongst Christians is as secure as the law of Christ can make it; for '*so hath the Lord ordained, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel.*'"—This is voluntaryism. In Mr. Coleridge's theory, the " national clerisy" constitutes the third estate in the realm:—the *first* consisting of the " land-owners, or possessors of fixed property," by which " the *permanency* of the nation was provided for;"—the *second*, of " the merchants, manufacturers, and free citizens," by which provision was made for its " *progressiveness* and *personal freedom;*"—and the *third*, the " national church," or " national clerisy,"—" comprehending the learned of all denominations,—all

the liberal arts and sciences, the possession and application of which constitute the civilization of a country, as well as the theological,—the theologians taking the lead, because the science of theology was the root and the trunk of the knowledges that civilized man:"—and by this third estate, provision was made for the *civilization* of the community, taken in its largest and best sense, as comprehensive of its general intelligence and moral improvement. From this general clerisy, consisting, in the theory, of all orders of learned and scientific men, the rest have, in point of fact, withdrawn, and left the theologians alone. But then, these theologians are to be regarded, not at all as ministers of the church of Christ, but simply as civil functionaries—the only remaining branch of the national clerisy. And what, accordingly, is his description of the *national* church, in distinction from the *christian* church,—I may say, indeed, in *contrast* with it?—"The national church is a public and visible community, having ministers, whom the nation, through the agency of a constitution, hath created trustees of a reserved national fund, upon fixed terms and with defined duties, and whom, in case of breach of those terms or dereliction of those duties, the nation, through the same agency, may discharge." You will at once perceive that this is a *church* in a sense of the ingenious author's own; a church, in his original conception of it, of all descriptions of science as well as of religion,—a church of the nation's making, and with which neither the church of Christ, nor any branch of that church

whatever, has any thing to do. It is not the formation, on the part of any section of that church, of a voluntary alliance with the state,—or the state taking any such section under its special patronage and support. It is not, therefore, a connexion of church and state at all. It is a *national civilization establishment*, from which the church, as such, stands completely apart: and the only point of view in which it comes within the range of our discussion is, as involving the appropriation of a part of the national property for the support and propagation of a particular system of religious doctrine and worship, from which large masses of the community by which that property is furnished conscientiously dissent. In this view of it, it also may be left to stand or fall, according to the failure or the conclusiveness of our subsequent reasonings.

I would here, then, repeat, that, having no desire to take unreasonably high ground, as if I felt this necessary to the validity and success of my argument, I acquiesce in Dr. Chalmers's representation of the essential element of an established church—"*a sure legal provision for its ministrations.*" And this definition may be regarded as comprehending, by necessary implication, the three ingredients enumerated as entering into its constitution by Dr. Paley. These are—"1. A clergy, or an order of men secluded from other professions to attend upon the services of religion:—2. A legal provision for the maintenance of the clergy:—and 3. The confining of that provision to the teachers of a par-

ticular sect of Christianity."* Now, it is evident that, in a "sure legal provision for the ministrations of religion," there is presupposed a clergy by whom those ministrations are conducted; and Dr. C. occupies one of his lectures in vindicating the propriety of government "selecting one denomination of Christianity for the national religion;" and another, in expounding the reasons which justify the government, after having made that selection, in adhering to it. We are warranted, therefore, in considering Dr. C.'s definition of an Establishment as substantially the same with Dr. Paley's; the *one* essential element of the former, which corresponds with the *second* of the *three* essential ingredients of the latter, presupposing the *first*,—and the *third* being subsequently and separately contended for.

While on this part of my subject, I may just mention, for the sake of narrowing and defining the limits of the present controversy, that it is not with the question of endowments generally, but with that of state endowments exclusively, we have now to do. The utility or the injuriousness of private endowments, we are not called upon to discuss. We might make reference to them, for the purpose of illustrating our general principle, or any particular position connected with it; but our controversy is not with personal, but with public endowments. To speak, as Dr. C. does, as if a civil establishment, in the principle of it, existed, wherever an individual has taken a fancy to bestow his wealth, whether by donation or bequest, for the erection of places of

* Mor. and Polit. Phil. sect. on Eccl. Establishments.

worship, and the endowment in them of stated ministers of religion,—merely because, in such a case, the state has the power of seeing that the will of the donor or the testator be duly executed,—is surely a confounding of things that are very materially diverse from each other, and wears the aspect of an anxiety (of which there are other symptoms apparent elsewhere) to bring the principle of an Establishment into as near an assimilation as possible to the principle of voluntaryism, and to produce the impression, that the difference between them is not so very wide as some supporters of the latter have represented it. But this will not do. In the supposed case, of the state "making good the destinations"—or "seeing that effect and fulfilment be given to the intentions of the original testators,"—the state assumes no right to the revenues, nor any authority over them: it merely interprets, on principles of law or of equity, the will of the endowing party. Private endowments may have in them, to a certain extent, the tendencies of public endowments, and, on account of such tendencies, may also be objectionable: but the two are not the same, and ought not to be confounded. If, either in England or Scotland, individuals could be found, disposed, out of their personal substance, to endow the many places of worship which the zeal and liberality of church-extensionists have reared, no voluntary, certainly, would feel himself either entitled or disposed to say one word against it, as if it involved any of those elements of injustice, or of unscriptural interference with a higher authority, of

which he conceives there is ground to complain in the case of endowments that come from the public revenues; nor would any voluntary ever think of objecting to it, merely because the state, as the interpreter, through its judicial officers, of the law of the land, would have the power, upon an appeal, of settling the meaning of the deed, and of keeping, or restoring, the endowment, to a conformity with the testator's will. Lady Hewley's charity did not, surely, acquire the character of a state endowment, merely by its becoming the subject of an appeal to Chancery. How much soever we might be disposed to question the desirableness of private endowments in the church, on account of pernicious tendencies, which, on theoretical grounds, might be anticipated, and which too ample experience has proved to exist; yet this belongs not to our present inquiry. It is but blinding the eyes of the inconsiderate, to confound these with those of the state. And we will not be even so far accessory to the illusion, as to take up at all the discussion of the one, and so divert attention from the other, and tempt any to fancy, that, in setting aside the objections to private endowments, they would, *ipso facto*, refute those against establishments: for in reality, how successful soever they might think themselves, or might actually be, they would not so much as have entered upon the controversy.

"When a West India planter," says Dr. C., "sends for a Moravian missionary, and maintains "him in the work of instructing the labourers on his "estate, we have here the little model of an Establish-

"ment. The planter maintains the missionary; and "the missionary, in return, teaches on the estate of "the planter; yet teaches nothing there but his own "Christianity. The Bible is as much his fountain-"head as before,—truth and holiness as much the "objects of his resolute adherence as before. The "whole effect of the relation upon which he has "entered, is, to bring the gospel into contact with "hundreds of immortal creatures, who, but for the "miniature establishment, must have lived in guilt, "and died in darkness."*—"The little model of an "Establishment!" A model is "a representation in little of something either made or to be made." It implies an exact resemblance between the little and the great,—between itself, and that which it represents,—in its various parts, and in their relative proportions;—as, for example, in Sir Christopher Wren's wooden model of St. Paul's Cathedral. But in the present case, it is far from being so. There are particulars, of essential importance, in which the correspondence fails,—in which the model is altogether unlike the structure to which it is compared; as unlike as if the miniature of the magnificent ornament of the British metropolis had been without the transept and the dome.† There are two things which seem to be entirely forgotten.—1. What the planter does, he does *at his own cost*, and he

* Lectures, p. 13.

† Since delivering the lecture, I have been reminded of what I had forgotten, that the existing St. Paul's was *not* executed in conformity with the model alluded to. It is of no moment. The reader has only to *suppose* the conformity.

does *spontaneously*. It comes from his own purse, and from his own will. It is, therefore, what he has an unquestionable title to do; the title which, so far as our relation to fellow-men is concerned, we all assert for ourselves—to do what he will with his own. But the contents of the national treasury are not the personal property of the administrators of government. They belong to the community, for which the governors are the responsible trustees. So that here come in all the important questions respecting rights of property, and rights of conscience, and rights of the magistrate in matters of religion, and the obligation or non-obligation of civil rulers to provide from the public purse for the religion of their subjects. Such provision, when it *is* made, coming from the pockets of millions, is applied, in myriads of instances, not, like the planter's, in conformity with the will and the conscientious principles of those by whom it is contributed, but in direct opposition to both. Does *that* make no difference?—Then—2. The West India planter, when a proprietor and master of *slaves*, had a power—(I am very far from saying a right)—over his dependents, as his property, to take his own way with them, and to compel them to submit to such modes of instruction as he thought fit to institute. Blessed be the God of providence and grace, that time is gone by! The too real power, and the imaginary right, have alike come to an end. The planter, now that he is the master, not of slaves, but of freemen, may, indeed, at his pleasure, erect places of worship, and support ministers of

religion, within the limits of his estate; and is at liberty to make his choice among Moravian, episcopalian, presbyterian, methodist, baptist, or independent teachers. Provided he does not *exact the means* from those who are now freemen, and provided he does not compel, or attempt to compel, those freemen to submit to his dictation, and to take the religious instruction, be it what it may, which he is pleased to furnish,—but leaves them, as he now must, to judge and choose for themselves, to follow the light of their own consciences, and to employ such funds as they have in supporting teachers of their own choice, should they not like his,—all is well—no one is wronged; he spends his money, and they spend theirs, in the way they respectively prefer. Were the planter, the proprietor of the soil, to institute a system, by which he might exact a tax from its cultivators for the support of *his* religious principles and modes of worship, while from these they were conscientiously dissenting, and, at the same time, supporting their own;—or by which he might retain in his hands a regular deduction from the wages of the whole of the labourers on his estate, for maintaining divine ordinances in the way preferred by a part of them, while the other part had also to maintain them in the way preferred by themselves;—we should then have something better entitled to the designation of the "miniature," or "little model, of an Establishment."

With regard to the position, that "there might be an entire dependence of the church upon the state in things temporal, without even the shadow

of dependence upon it in things ecclesiastial;"—that is another question. Without entering at present, further than we have done, on the ecclesiastical independence of the church, when united with the state, we may be allowed to observe, that it is a suspicious circumstance, indicative of conscious weakness in regard to any cause, when, along with the disposition to fritter it down, and to bring it as near as possible to the principles of those against whom it is defended,—there is discovered also a proneness to frame the advocacy rather on the hypothetical ground of what *might be*, than on the actual ground of what *has been*, and what *is*. Nothing is easier than to take up the defence of Establishments in a way similar to that in which some have defended the moral tendencies of the stage, by imagining a Utopian system, in which there is nothing, on the part of the state, but the simple ministration of support;—no authority, no interference, no patronage, no influence, no deleterious contamination of secularity, no tendency towards the conformity of the church to the world, of the spiritual to the temporal, of the kingdom of heaven to the kingdoms of the earth:—nothing, I say, is more easy, than to draw, in this way, a fascinating picture of what never has been, nowhere is, and, judging both from experience and from the nature of things, it may with great confidence be affirmed, never can be. Dr. C. says—"Although "the church should receive its maintenance, and all "its maintenance, from the civil power, it follows "not that it therefore receives its theology from the

"same quarter; or that this theology should acquire "thereby the slightest taint or infusion of secularity." And yet, upon his own showing, it is the duty of the civil power to choose or select the denomination of Christianity on which its special favours are to be bestowed; so that the correctness, or scriptural soundness, of the endowed theology must depend upon that choice;—and when that choice is made, the same authority that made it must give its sanction to any change in the system to which it has vouchsafed its support, ere such change can be introduced; the power to change obviously lying, in all reason, not with the party that receives the support, but with the party that bestows it. The right to *choose* indubitably implies the right to *change*. If the state bestows its endowments for a special end, and by experience comes to discover that that end may be more effectually answered by a different system from the one on which it has conferred them, it would be bound, in the faithful discharge of its trust for the public good, to make the change. The theory would seem to be unsound and contradictory, that gave to the state the power of choice, and to the church the power of change. For what would be the worth of a power to choose, which, in all its elections, the power to change, resident in another party, might instantly, or at any time, frustrate? The creed which, as the creed of the endowed church, acts of parliament ratified, acts of parliament can alter, and acts of parliament alone; and acts of parliament *ought* to alter, whenever to the legislature of the country it shall appear that

alteration promises to be conducive to the country's benefit,—to the greatest good of the greatest number,—the grand end of all the authority with which governors are invested. It could not be competent to the endowed church, in such circumstances, to say—"The endowments are ours; we will keep them; you have no right to take them from us." The Establishment that has been rightfully made by an act of the national legislature, can, by an act of the same legislature, be as rightfully unmade. The power of choice remains where it was when first exercised; and it may be exercised again by the transference of the bounty to another system, on the very same principle on which its first exercise proceeded. No man, as it appears to me, who admits the right of the civil power to choose the religious principles and worship of the community, can, with any consistency, deny these consequences. And, simple as Dr. Chalmers's definition of an Establishment appeared to be, they are all legitimate deductions from it;—or rather, I should say, enter into the very idea of every church established by law. It may be very simple, and look very plausible, to say that an Establishment consists, solely and essentially, in "a sure legal provision" for the "ministrations of religion by the clergy of a selected denomination;" but the true definition of an Establishment is—The selection and endowment, for public purposes, of the creed, the forms of worship, and the clergy, of a particular denomination of religious professors, which denomination, owing its existence, as an Establishment,

to the will of the civil power, is, in that capacity, dependent for its permanence on the same will. Call it, with Paley, a scheme for public instruction, —still it is a scheme which the state adopts, which the state maintains, which the state may alter, which the state may abolish. Call it, with Mr. Gladstone, the religion of the "governing body,"— if the governing body *chose* it, the governing body may *change* it.

I must now proceed to consider the nature of the VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE.—And here there is a great deal more to do in explaining away misrepresentations, than in stating the simple truth. "*The Voluntary Principle*" is a designation to which we not only do not object, but which we have ourselves adopted, and in which we glory. If any persons will employ the compellation of *the Voluntaries* as one of derision, we cannot help it. We probably like it somewhat better than the *Compulsories* like theirs. I do not like nicknames on either side; but, regarding the *Voluntaries* as simply meaning the abettors of the Voluntary Principle as the true scriptural principle for the maintenance and propagation of the gospel, and the enlargement of the church, we accept it, and count the scorn associated with the application of it our honour. For what is the Voluntary Principle?—what, but the principle of "faith working by love?"—what, but the principle of zeal for the glory of Christ, inspired by this love, and operating, in cheerful contribution and active effort, for the support and extension of the knowledge of his name, and of the

principles of his spiritual reign? The advocates of the Voluntary Principle hold and avow the conviction, that to the operation of this faith, and love, and zeal, and liberality, and effort, within the church of God itself, the church's exalted Head was pleased to commit the interests of his cause on earth. There is nothing in their principles which they would shrink from "proclaiming on the house-tops." They are aware that they could not be distinguished from others by merely holding the general obligation of christian charity—of spontaneous or voluntary liberality. Where is the man that would retain the name of Christian, and deny that? They admit freely, that their principle includes the distinct denial of the right of the state to interfere at all—by legislation, by endowment, or otherwise—for the support and extension of the church,—and the no less distinct affirmation, that this is the church's own business, the special duty and privilege of its members,—a duty enjoined, a privilege conferred, on all his faithful subjects, by the King of Zion; a charge left by him with them, and with them alone; a charge of which they alone can feel the obligation, and which they alone can legitimately fulfil. It is necessary to be quite explicit here. Honesty to our opponents, and faithfulness to Christ, alike require it. Dr. Chalmers pleads for the exercise of the Voluntary Principle; but then he contends, that the state has its part to act in the matter, as well as the church. Here we differ. This is what we peremptorily and *in toto* deny. We hold the church's support and extension

to be the church's own concern,—to be effected from her own resources, and by her own efforts, in dependence on the blessing of her gracious and glorious Head, to the exclusion of all such political interference. In its operation within the church, our principle is simply that of *the strong helping the weak;* of those who *have*, imparting to those who *have not*,—in the generous spirit of Him who said—and in saying it, spoke from a divine experience of the truth of his words—"It is more blessed to give than to receive:" and when it extends beyond the church, and, along with its internal support, aims at its enlargement, it is then the principle of compassion for perishing men, seeking their salvation;—the principle of solicitude for the honour of the Redeemer, seeking the multiplication of his subjects. I am speaking now of *what the principle is:* of its authority and its efficiency we are to treat hereafter; and until then, the smile of any at its assumed incompetency may be repressed.

In considering the true nature of the principle, it would be unpardonable to pass over the very extraordinary representations given of it by Dr. Chalmers. "When men tell us in argument," he says, "of the Voluntary Principle, they are not "aware of a certain ambiguity in the phrase, which, "though not generally noticed by controversialists, "would, if fully exposed and done away, go far to "simplify, if not to settle, the whole controversy."* By this announcement, when I came to it, all my interest and curiosity were roused to the uttermost.

* Lectures, p. 71.

I certainly was not aware of any ambiguity in the phrase which, like others, I had been accustomed to use. I was on the alert, therefore, for the new discovery. What could it be, that was thus to impart clearness and simplicity to the controversy, and even to go far toward its satisfactory settlement? The distinction which he proceeds to make in the meaning of the Voluntary Principle, is introduced with no little prefatory formality. He complains of the inconsistency of those who argue against Establishments at once on the ground of the "*free trade system*," (of which he had treated in the previous lecture, and of which we shall speak again,) and on that of "*the Voluntary Principle*," —whereas it is only, he observes, in *one* of the senses of the latter, according to the distinction he is about to bring forward, that it at all agrees with the former—while in the *other* sense they are "at utter discrepancy." He prepares his readers for "the chasing away of a certain mistiness which hangs over the whole controversy," by the coming exposition of this "ambiguity." He represents the "undistinguishing advocates of the Voluntary Principle," in overlooking it, and in "confounding together," as the result of this oversight, "their own favourite principle, with that of free trade in Christianity," as "proving themselves alike insensible to the strength and the weakness of their own cause." And, after having, for several pages, kept the expectation of the anxious reader on the stretch, and inspired him, as much as possible, with a presentiment of any thing but respect for the purblind

Voluntaries, forth comes, in all due form, the "simplifying" and "mist-dispelling" secret. To do its eminent author justice, I must quote an entire paragraph:—"There are two sorts, then, of "the Voluntary Principle, which are almost never "adverted to, but which it is of the utmost argu- "mentative importance to discriminate the one "from the other. A man, then, may either make "a voluntary return, in the shape of a price or "equivalent, for those christian ministrations which "are rendered to himself and his family; or he "may make a voluntary offering, in the shape of a "donation, to set agoing, or to support, a christian "ministration for others beside himself, or for more "families than his own. The one may be alto- "gether as voluntary a payment as the other. He "may not have been more willing to make remune- "ration for his own share of the article of christian "instruction to himself, than he is willing to make "a contribution, that others may share it along with "him. Both of these exercises, however different "in their effect and object, have been referred to "the Voluntary Principle; and the result has been, "that, to a great extent, it has darkened or be- "wildered the whole controversy. Two things so "different in their nature, ought to be signalised "and set apart from each other by different names. "When a congregation do, from their own contri- "butions, whether formed by seat-rents or other- "wise, support their own minister, we shall put it "down to the account of *internal* voluntaryism,— "and that, because the members of the congregation

" raise within themselves a sufficiency for all their " expenses. In as far as they have been helped to " accomplish this by the contributions of others, not " members of the congregation, we shall put it " down to the account of *external* voluntaryism—as " coming from people without the limits of the " congregation. In other words, the one is volun- " taryism *ab intra;* the other, voluntaryism *ab extra.* " We regret the scholastic character of these desig- " nations; but we can find no other more expressive " than these."*

This distinction, thus imposingly put forth, we then find pervading the entire subsequent reasonings of the lecture. With all my respect (and it is, and has ever been, sincere and deep) for the lecturer, I do feel it no easy matter to write with seriousness on such a subject. I question if ever there was an instance, in which the throwing of a distinction into the form of a somewhat philosophical statement, and investing it with the garb of a " scholastic character," had more in it of the ludicrous, or was more calculated to give the semblance of importance to what was nugatory, of novelty to what was old, and of originality and invention to what was trite and common-place. What Voluntary, I would ask, from the beginning hitherto, was ever known to hold the Voluntary Principle *ab intra alone?* or to regard it, under this restricted aspect, as that for which he was contending? With whom, possessing any portion, how minute soever, of the attribute

* Lectures, pp. 74, 75.

of common sense, was it ever matter of dispute, whether "internal voluntaryism," in the sense put upon it in the above extract, of the personal ability of each individual, or the collective ability of each congregation, to provide "the article of christian instruction" *for themselves alone*, was sufficient for the maintenance and propagation of Christianity—for the support and extension of the church? The internal and the external *must* go together. They are one principle, operating in a narrower or a wider range. They were never separated in the mind of any intelligent Voluntary, when he thought or spoke of his great principle. There is a wide difference between "not being aware" of a distinction, and considering the distinction as one so palpable as not to require being formally stated. Not aware of it! Not aware of the difference between a man supplying himself, and a man helping others!—between a congregation supplying its own wants, and a congregation assisting to supply the wants of others? Yet such is the amount—the whole amount — of the distinction. When the question is, between *the sufficiency of the Voluntary Principle* on the one hand, and *the necessity of state support* on the other, who ever thinks of the *internal* voluntaryism alone, or even chiefly? The Voluntary Principle is the principle which prompts the Christian at once to provide the supply of the bread of life for himself, and, at the same time, to do what lies in his power to make the same provision for others. The separation of the two is impossible. We should not admit a man to be under the influ-

ence of our principle at all, were he satisfied with supplying himself. That would be the operation of a principle, unknown in the code of christian morals, — specially disowned in the code of voluntaryism,—the principle of *spiritual selfishness*. The Voluntary Principle is essentially the principle of diffusive benevolence. It is the charity of the gospel, in all its largeness of field and of influence. It is the principle of the apostolic injunction —"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." It is the principle of loyalty to the King of Zion, which inscribes on all we are and have, "Holiness unto the Lord;" and at the foot of the cross, with heart and eye full, consecrates self and substance to his service and glory.

In the opinions and statements of Dr. C. on this point, there are two things at which I have been greatly surprised. One of them only can, with appropriateness, be introduced here;—the other shall have due notice hereafter. The one to which I now request your attention is, his attempt to make out the identity of the Voluntary Principle *ab extra* with the principle of an Establishment. Thus, when speaking of Constantine, he says—"When he came "forth with his great imperial bounty, or bene- "faction, he only did, on the large scale, what "thousands of benefactors had previously, and for "hundreds of years, done on a small scale before "him."—There is here, I am aware, a mistake as to fact; Constantine not having actually bestowed any state endowment on the church, additional to the

property already in her possession; but a mistake as to fact makes no difference as to the expression of principle. What Constantine actually did, we may hereafter notice. Again:—"It will now be "seen, that there is a harmony not previously seen, "perhaps not even suspected before, between the "doctrine of a National Establishment, and at least "one great branch of the Voluntary Principle. It "is not very discriminating, we think, to hail the "liberalities of private individuals, and to refuse "and regard them as incompetent and wrong, when "they are congregated in the form of one great "liberality from the state." And, passing over various sentences and expressions I had marked, the following is abundantly explicit:—"A parliamen- "tary vote, then, in aid of religious education is, "both in principle and in effect, but an example of "the Voluntary Principle *ab extra:* and you will "now, perhaps, see, that on this subject, there was "room for a distinction between the things which "differ, but which are apt to be confounded,—even "though you may have disliked the scholastic, and "somewhat repulsive terms which we have em- "ployed for the expression of it. It is but internal "voluntaryism, or rather the assertion of its suffi- "ciency, that comes into conflict with the principle "of a National Establishment. On the moment that "the internal draws upon, or seeks help from, the "external voluntaryism,—which it does in fact all "over the kingdom,—our cause is practically and "substantially gained: for this external voluntaryism, "so far from being in conflict with the principle of

"a National Establishment, is in perfect and precise "coincidence therewith."*

It is not my business at present to show, how far the cause advocated by Dr. C. is from being, by the help of this wonder-working distinction, "practically and substantially gained." Our future reasonings, we trust, may satisfy you of the contrary. We have to do now with the definitive explanation and settlement of terms and principles; and in aiming at this, it becomes necessary for us to evince,—which may be done in a very few sentences,—that the charge of *want of discrimination*, and *confounding things which differ*, lies on his own side, not on ours. It is a phenomenon,—for which it may be either difficult or easy to account, according to the particular aspect under which we contemplate the mind where it presents itself,—that such a man should fail to discern the difference between the spontaneous exercise of liberality, on the part of individuals, with what is *their own*, and the bestowment, on the part of the state, of what is *the property of the public*. In the latter case, the benefaction is not, on the part of those by whom it is voted away, of "their own proper good,"—but of what many thousands of those from whom, as the result of taxation, it has come, would conscientiously disapprove of being so appropriated, and, if their proportion of it were in their own possession, would, on the ground of principle, withhold it, or devote it to some other purpose. The two things, therefore, differ essentially. They differ in the principle of them; and

* Lectures, pp. 93, 94.

that is the most essential difference of all. In the one case, the contribution is voluntarily given by the man to whom it of right belongs, for an object which he approves and likes; in the other, it is first exacted by official power from the people, and then bestowed on an object which multitudes of them disapprove and disown. There is only one point in which the two cases have even the semblance of agreement,—namely, that in both an extraneous supply is provided,—a supply, that is, beyond the means of the persons themselves by whom the privileges of religion are thus enjoyed. But even in this one point, the agreement is apparent only, not real: for, who are they on whom the enjoyment of these privileges is thus conferred? They are themselves a part of the civil community: they have themselves, therefore, contributed to the funds from which the enjoyment of the privileges is provided. What, then, is the amount of the favour,—what the nature and extent of the blessing,—boasted of as bestowed by that Establishment which claims, κατ' ἐξοχὴν, the honourable designation of "the poor man's church?" The pecuniary means from which their spiritual wants are provided for, come, after all, from the persons themselves for whom the provision is made; so that they are cheated into the fancy that they are getting their religion for nothing, when they are actually, although indirectly, paying for it; and the amount of their enviable privilege comes to be, that of furnishing the cost, and then getting the article in a present, — or that of being allowed to retain a shilling in the right-

hand pocket, in return for one that has previously been taken out of the left.—And this is identical with the Voluntary Principle *ab extra!* We disown it. It is not the Voluntary Principle *at all.* Instead of *external voluntaryism in the church,* it is *internal compulsoryism in the state.* It is quite true, that there is no inconsistency in part being done by voluntaryism, when the state will not do all; and it is true, too, that the Voluntaries do approve thus far of the exertions of their church friends,—such exertions as are made by spontaneous liberality. But we cannot admit, that what the state does and what their voluntaryism does are at all "coincident." They would have *all* from the state, if it could be got; and, if the principle of a National Establishment be right, they are in this only consistent with themselves,—following out, or desiring to follow out, their principle. If, therefore, they had their will, there would be no voluntaryism. Voluntaryism with them, is only a succedaneum for what cannot be got otherwise,—a kind of necessary evil,—a supplement for the state's niggardly and culpable deficiency! Such voluntaryism is hardly entitled to the name. It *wills,* only because the state *will not;* and if the state would, *it* would not. It seeks to lay the entire burden on the heavily taxed community, and consequently on the poor, whom it is professing its solicitude to relieve. Is that, then, true voluntaryism, which directly aims at doing away voluntaryism?—avowing openly, that all its own efforts are constrained by the state's refusal to do its duty,—and that they are all, more-

over, a "stepping-stone" to the attainment of the great object of its desires and supplications—*an adequate grant from the government?* It is not. Genuine voluntaryism disdains a proxy. Were the state ever so willing to give, it would not be willing to receive. In the circumstances supposed by Dr. C., when he says* — "Meanwhile we main- "tain, that there is no conflict, no contrariety, but "the utmost harmony of principle, between the legal "and the voluntary parts of our conjunct operation; "—we have been gifted with one sum by a willing "christian community in Scotland; and we expect, "sooner or later, to be gifted with another by a "willing House of Commons in London;—and after "having obtained the willing support of both these "parties, our pugnacious opponents will be quite "welcome to call us Voluntaries if they please;"—we assuredly would not admit their title to the honourable designation. We should retain all our "pugnacity" in resisting such an alliance, and in refusing to call by a common name principles so essentially contrary to each other. When Dr. Chalmers adds—"Only we hope that it will serve "to rectify their conceptions, after they have made "the discovery that even the Voluntary Principle, "which they have hitherto imagined to be all "against our cause, if viewed comprehensively "enough, and in all its bearings, is actually on the "side of a National Establishment for the christian "education of the people;"—we deem it sufficient, after what has already been said, to reply, that what

* Lectures, p. 98.

we had "imagined" before, we imagine still; that we still, notwithstanding the benefit of his discoveries, regard the Voluntary Principle and the Establishment Principle as *toto cœlo* different, and the attempt to bring them to identity as tending, not to "*rectify* our conceptions," but in the most unaccountable way to *confound* them. The poles will meet, ere the two can be reconciled.

Let me, in bringing this lecture to a close, illustrate the positions I have just been laying down, by a parallel case. Dr. C. has always been a decided opponent of public national or municipal assessments for the poor—of a poor's rate. Allow me, then, to suppose a family, consisting of father and mother, and an assortment of children, of various ages,—to what number you please. This family, by the industry of its heads and members, does what it can towards its comfortable and independent maintenance, each individual working for the common good. This, in the doctor's "scholastic" phraseology, we may call *internal Voluntaryism*, or the Voluntary Principle *ab intra*. But it so happens, that, with united efforts and united generosity, the family is still behind. It requires foreign aid,—some additional supply from the humanity of others. Will Dr. C., then, allege, that the moment this family receives assistance from without, — the moment *external Voluntaryism*, or the Voluntary Principle *ab extra*, comes to its relief,—this is the same thing as a public assessment for the poor? He would have the same reason precisely for pronouncing the two identical in the

one case, as in the other. I cannot conceive a more exact parallelism. An advocate of a poor's rate might, I cannot but think, in all fairness, with a very slight change of the terms, parody the doctor's language respecting the principle of an Establishment, and say:—"In the moment that the internal draws upon, or seeks help from, the external voluntaryism,—which it does in fact all over the kingdom,—our cause is practically and substantially gained; for this external voluntaryism, so far from being in conflict with *a national provision for the poor*, is in perfect and precise coincidence therewith." And how would Dr. C. rebut the retort upon him of his own somewhat contumelious verdict—"It is not very discrimi-"nating, we think, thus to hail the liberalities of "private individuals, and to refuse or regard them "as incompetent and wrong, when they are con-"gregated in the form of one great liberality from "the state?" Dr. C. appears to hold the opinion, that the benefaction of the state being, on its part, voluntary, this might, in what he would conceive a healthy condition of the public mind, be regarded as the expression of the aggregate voluntaryism of the community. But this, at all events, is no more than ideal; the fact being widely diverse from the theory:—and, as he would not be satisfied that the evils which, in common with many other moral and political economists, he considers as natively arising from public assessments for the poor, were done away by any extent of agreement among the principal payers of the exacted rate; so neither are we

satisfied that any similar extent of agreement would rectify the evils of an Establishment.

In so strangely confounding things that differ, this excellent and eminent man is not to be charged with the meanness or the guilt of any disingenuous attempt to impose upon the minds of others:—I am a firm believer in his "godly sincerity;" but I am forced to regard it as one of the most singular illusions ever practised by a man of high mental endowments upon his own. When it was alleged by the Voluntaries that their church friends, whether north or south of the Tweed, in raising sums so large for the purposes of church-extension, acted, to that extent, on the Voluntary Principle,—no more was alleged by them than every churchman granted. We never charged them with the entire adoption of our principles, but only commended them for so far acting upon them. We were disposed to give them credit for the willing mind, and to indulge the hope, that the experience of the blessedness of giving might contribute to attach them to the principles, and render them less solicitous about receiving;—that "as they had begun, so they would finish, in themselves and one another, this grace also,"—the "doubly-blessed" grace of christian liberality. But really, when Dr. Chalmers says—"Whereas our friends and most "vigilant guardians, the Voluntaries of Scotland, "allege of us, because of this our appeal to the "liberality of the christian public, that we have "come over to their principle;—they, from the "first moment of their preferring the same appeal

" themselves,—and when they sought, which they " have ever done, from the generosity of con- " tributors, what they could not make good from " the pew-rents of their own congregations,—from " that moment, in truth, did they *abandon their* " *own*, and *come over to our principle*;"—we are confounded; we are at a loss to believe him in earnest. As a *jeu d'esprit*, it had been well enough:—we might have returned the smile with which it was written. But it is no *jeu d'esprit*. It is in harmony with his previous positions, propounded, as they had been, with all seriousness. And yet, in sober earnest, what better is it than a playing with words? The only satisfaction one has in contemplating such a statement, arises from the thought of its indicating a lurking favour, after all, towards the despised Voluntary Principle, and a wish to obtain as much as possible of the credit of it on the side of the Establishment:—only we cannot think it altogether fair, that its advocates should conciliate the favour, and mitigate the prejudices, of their opponents, by thus making the Voluntaries appear as if they were contending for contention's sake, and fighting against a principle which they had themselves embraced, —embroiling the whole christian church, and the whole political community, for a distinction without a difference. This will not do. In holding the Voluntary Principle, we never held it otherwise than in the full and clear apprehension of the distinction which Dr. Chalmers takes the credit of having, for the first time, unfolded. We never

held it otherwise, than as comprehending both the *ab intra* and the *ab extra*, — the internal and the external Voluntaryism. We never, therefore, passed from the one to the other. And, in holding both, —or, to speak more correctly, in holding the one principle as comprehending—always and necessarily comprehending—both, —we did, and we do still, consider ourselves as holding a principle essentially distinct from that of an Establishment; as distinct as will is from force,—a gift from a tax,—a benevolent contribution from a compulsory exaction, — a free-will offering to the King of Zion from an imposed tribute to the king of Britain; — as distinct, in one word,—and I know no distinction more perfect,— as the kingdom of Christ from the kingdoms of this world!

# LECTURE II.

LEGITIMATE SOURCES OF ARGUMENT, AND GROUNDS OF DECISION.—OPENING OF SCRIPTURE ARGUMENT.—PRELIMINARY REMARKS.—NEW TESTAMENT.

"WHILE the enemies of religion," says the late Principal Hill, "have studied to divert the public attention from the offensive and mischievous nature of their principles, by disguising their hostility to religious Establishments under pretensions to liberality of sentiment and enlarged toleration, many who profess an earnest zeal for the stability and success of the gospel, have asserted that it stands in no need of forming any connexion with the state, and that its purity is always contaminated by so unnatural an alliance. The reasons of this assertion may often be traced in the private resentments, or political situation, of those from whom it proceeds. The assertion is dictated to some, by that spirit of innovation, which is weary of the present institutions of society, without having any distinct apprehension of what is to be substituted in their place; and with others, it is merely the rash expression of an opinion, which has been formed without due attention to the violence of human passions, and the course of human affairs. We

may often observe an indifference about religion, which, fostered by the multiplicity of the business and amusements of life, proceeds to open profanity; a turbulence which derives pleasure from interrupting, upon every capricious impulse, the serious occupations of others; a rashness of speculation, and love of singularity, which delight in attacking truths the dearest, the most important, the most generally received; and a depravity of heart, and obstinacy in wickedness, which regard with contempt and aversion an authoritative system of pure morality. Now," he proceeds to say, "if we combine all these circumstances, and allow to each its due weight, we will not feel ourselves entitled to presume that the pious zeal of the friends of Christianity will, in every age, be sufficient to defeat the designs of its enemies. But, while we rely, with entire security, upon the promise of Him who said that 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against his church,' we will thankfully acknowledge his wisdom in employing, as an instrument of fulfilling his promise, this salutary appointment, that civil society, in return for the support which it derives from the pure principles of religion, inculcated by the gospel, shall concur with christian zeal in repelling every outrage. Ecclesiastical power, feeble and unarmed when opposed to the violence of man, is aided by the authority of human government."*

I have not quoted these sentences for the purpose of calling attention to the view presented in them of the nature of an Ecclesiastical Establishment, which,

* Instit. pp. 141, 142.

though briefly expressed, is in nearer agreement with the Warburtonian than with any other; or to the more than doubtful trustworthiness of the aid looked to for the security of the church of Christ; or to the false conceptions which they indicate of the true character and ends of ecclesiastical power. What I wish attended to is, the enumeration of the sources to which opposition to Ecclesiastical Establishments is traced—of the motives by which their opponents are supposed to be actuated. And, was there no other within the range of possibilities, besides those enumerated,—no other that christian charity could suggest, even in behalf of those "who profess an earnest zeal for the stability and success of the gospel?" It is true, that respecting the unworthy, and even infamous motives mentioned, no more is said than that the assertion of the injurious tendencies of Establishments "*may often* be traced" to them. Even this is not very charitable, when applied to such characters. But not a hint is given of any better principle to which the opposition might be imputed; and the reader is left with the impression, that, if any others were in the writer's mind, they were of the same description; and that hostility to Establishments was, in his estimation, identical with hostility to Christianity.—But there *is* another;—a principle—a motive—which, with a clear conscience, a conscience that pleads guiltless to each one of the enumerated imputations, we distinctly and boldly avow: we are hostile to Establishments, because we are deliberately and devoutly convinced that they are *destitute of the authority of*

*Jesus Christ — a human innovation on the divine constitution of the church.* This, though not our only, is our first and main ground. We are far, indeed, from admitting, that even on the inferior ground of *expediency,* we could not maintain a successful argument. We are satisfied, on the contrary, that we could;—that we could maintain it both by sound reasons on abstract principles, and by an abundant induction of facts from the entire history of Christendom;—and further, that we could take a firm and impregnable stand on the most palpable and universally admitted principles of justice between man and man. But although, for the sake of evincing the perfect accordance of divine institutions with all that is equitable and all that is expedient, we may *end* with considerations like these,—we dare not *begin* with them. We must put the Bible first. We must hold the question of divine authority as paramount. If the dictates of that authority are by any means to be found, we cannot but regard it as an act of the most inexcusable presumption to postpone the inquiry after them to any other inquiry whatsoever; or when we have found them, to inquire further. With the discovery of the mind of God, inquiry ends, and obedience commences. It seems one of the plainest dictates of reason and common sense, that, when a controversy relates to any feature in the constitution of the christian church, we should look for the settlement of it where alone that constitution can be learned. What should we think of that man's wits, who should set about settling a question respecting

some department of the British constitution, without ever looking to British history or to British statutes and acts of parliament? If it is ascertained that we have *no* authoritative instructions, then by all means let us tax our own wisdom for the best constitution we can frame; but if we have, let us beware of the preposterous folly, of either leaving them unexamined, or giving the preference to our own inventions.

That "the Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants," is a maxim which every one who assumes the designation holds in theory; but theory is one thing, and practice another. "If any one," says the author of the Natural History of Enthusiasm, "were required, without premeditation, to give a reply to the question, 'What is the most prominent circumstance in the present state of the christian church?' he would, if sufficiently informed on the subject, almost certainly answer, 'The honour done to the Scriptures.' Such an answer may be supposed, as suggested by the conspicuousness of the fact." By "the honour done to the Scriptures," he means, among other things, the prevailing recognition of their supreme and exclusive authority, in all matters of religious faith and practice; the growing disposition to make them the immediate appeal, and the ultimate standard. And the honour thus done to the Scriptures is honour done to their Divine Author. We honour God, when we honour his word; when, "becoming fools that we may be wise," we bow, with implicit faith, to the intimations of his mind, and with

implicit obedience to the dictates of his will. The able writer justly regards this as one of the most promising symptoms in the religious aspect of the present eventful period; auguring the happiest results to the church, and, through the church, to the world. He speaks, with truth, of the Reformation as having been, "in all senses, a resurrection of the Bible;" and, although with sufficiently sanguine anticipation, yet not without solid reason, notwithstanding exceptions to the contrary, he represents "the oracles of God" as, in our own day, "visibly ascending to the zenith of their rightful power," and "the necessary preparations as completed for their instalment in the place of undisputed authority."

We do hail this character of the times, in as far as it accords with existing facts, with unfeigned delight; and, in proportion to this delight, is the regret we feel for any counteraction of the happy tendency, with all its millennial promise. How deeply is it to be deplored, that such counteraction should have been interposed by a man of such eminent and merited celebrity as Dr. C.—a man of weight and influence so seldom surpassed; and, by consequence, so beneficial on the one hand, or injurious on the other, according to the direction given to it. Could there be a stronger practical counteraction of the characteristic tendency, just adverted to, of the age in which we live, than that such a man,—a man whose sacred official trust it is to infuse into the very fountain-head of christian instruction the spirit of reverential submission to

the divine word,—the Gamaliel to so many of the rising ministry in the Scottish Establishment,—in delivering a series of lectures on a subject which immediately relates to the church of Christ, to the support and progress of his gospel, to the duties incumbent on his followers, in one of the most interesting departments of their Master's work, — a subject, therefore, which naturally, one should have thought unavoidably, leads to the Bible, and of which *no one point could be satisfactorily settled without it;*—that such a man should hardly so much as have adverted to the existence of such an authority! God is my witness, with what reluctance I now use the language of reprehension; but, on such an occasion, I know not what other language to employ. Faithfulness to God, and to truth, imperatively requires it. They were noble sentiments which, many years ago, were delivered by him, at or even before the commencement of his brilliant career, when writing on this very subject—of the supreme importance of the authority of revelation: —" Had no message come to us from the fountain-
" head of truth, it were natural enough for every
" individual mind to betake itself to its own specu-
" lation. But a message *has* come to us, bearing
" on its forehead every character of authenticity;
" and is it right now, that the question of our faith,
" or of our duty, should be committed to the capri-
" cious variations of this man's taste, or of that
" man's fancy? *Our* maxim, and *our* sentiment!
" God has put an authoritative stop to all this. He
" has spoken; and the right or the liberty of specu-

" lation no longer remains to us. The question now " is, not, ' What thinkest thou?' In the days of " pagan antiquity, no other question could be put; " and the wretched delusions and idolatries of " that period let us see what kind of answer the " human mind is capable of making, when left to its " own guidance, and its own authority. But we call " ourselves Christians, and profess to receive the " Bible as the directory of our faith; and the only " question in which we are concerned is, ' What is " written in the law;—how readest thou?'"* These sentiments he illustrates, with all his characteristic amplitude and energy. " The Bible," says he, " will allow of no compromise. It professes to be " the directory of our faith, and claims a total ascen- " dency over the souls and the understandings of " men. It will enter into no composition with us, " or our natural principles. It challenges the whole " mind as its due, and it appeals to the truth of " heaven for the high authority of its sanctions. " ' Whosoever addeth to, or taketh from, the words " of this book, is accursed,' is the absolute language " in which it delivers itself. This brings us to its " terms. There is no way of escaping after this. " We must bring every thought into the captivity of " its obedience; and, closely as ever lawyer stuck " to his document or to his extract, must we abide " by the rule and the doctrine which this authentic " memorial of God sets before us."†

Why, O why, in the present instance, was the

* Evidences of Christianity. Works, vol. iv. pp. 434, 435.

† Ibid, p. 440.

example of this great and good man so sadly at variance with these just and noble sentiments? Why, instead of making his direct appeal "to the law and to the testimony," did he thus contribute to draw away the public mind from the only true source of information and evidence? Was it worthy of him, after pleading so well for the paramount authority of the Scriptures, to neutralize his pleading by his practice? Was it worthy of him, while thus, with his lips, bidding God-speed to the sacred oracles in their "ascent to the zenith of their rightful power," to put forth his hand to arrest them? Was it worthy of him, "when the necessary preparations were completed for their instalment in the place of undisputed authority," to mar those preparations, and put back, as far as his example could effect it, the day of their triumphant ascendency? We seriously bewail it. It was not wrong merely in relation to the particular controversy; it was a great general injury to the progress of truth.

In a sentence quoted in our former lecture, Dr. C. says, "There is nothing in the doctrine of the "Spirit's agency that should foreclose the question, "which still remains to us in all its importance, of "the best polity, or the best platform, for a church "upon earth." It is here assumed that this question is one which "*remains to us;*" and since the Doctor never alludes to the New Testament as in any one point settling it, or designed to settle it, we are forced to conclude that he regarded it as a question left to the determination of human wisdom, on the principles and calculations of expediency.

Nay, we have clearer evidence that such was the designed import of his words,—namely, his explicit admission, elsewhere made, of "the absence of any distinct and definite authority for an established church in the New Testament" such as presents itself so unequivocally in the Old.* Now, here comes in our previous question, — a question, which, although strangely lost sight of by Dr. C., we must be permitted not only to move, but to urge upon attention and investigation, and to press resolutely to a conclusion, as of all that can be agitated, the one which most peremptorily demands the first settlement;—and the settlement of which, moreover, ought to be the settlement of every other,—authoritatively superseding all further inquiry;—the question, namely, whether the determination of the point under controversy *really is left to us*:—whether there is or is not a settlement of it made for us, in the statute book of principle and duty, to whose authority every consistent christian bows. We have granted to Dr. C. the necessity of uniting a system of means and expedients with the spirit of reliance on divine aid and influence. But our question is — Have we no system of means and expedients *prescribed to us?* We may admit their necessity, and, with Dr. C., regard as "unintelligent" and "drivelling" the piety that does not,—whilst yet we may consider the scheme of an Establishment as destitute of divine authority, and, in endeavouring to "set it aside," may not be at all chargeable with setting aside the

* Lectures, p. 108.

use of means and expedients, but only with setting aside a system of human means and earthly expedients. We are agreed about the importance of the *end.* We are agreed about the necessity of *means:* the sole question relates to the obligatory character of any *particular description* of means;—whether there be any that have the divine sanction, and which we are consequently bound to adopt; or whether we are left to follow the dictates of our own discretion. The lightness with which this view of the question is sometimes regarded by professing Christians, is to my mind quite appalling; and, even with respect to not a few who in words admit its importance, and even grant the absence of all authority for an Establishment in the apostolic writings,—how rarely is the admission followed out! It would seem as if the subjects of Christ felt themselves at liberty to dissent from his judgment; and, even when they are satisfied that he has given a decision, to decline compliance, and to hold by the existing system. They follow custom. Habit is strong,—faith weak. The system is wrong, they allow; but they don't like change. But is this the amount of submission that is due to the King of Zion?—this, all the force which a conviction of his authority should exert upon the conscience of his subjects? "To that man will I look, saith Jehovah, who is humble and of a contrite spirit, and who trembleth at my word." Were there more of this trembling at the word of God, there would be much less difficulty in settling many a question of controversy. I can conceive of nothing more pre-

posterous, than for the professed servants of Christ to be squandering their powers of invention and ratiocination, in devising and vindicating plans of their own, — appealing, in their vindication, to principles of natural religion,— to the dictates of human reason,—to the suggestions of expediency,— to the customs of nations,—to the experience of ages,—to the claims of long-existing institutions; when there is one question, which holds precedence of all, and of which the settlement should settle all—the question, whether by the highest authority we are left thus at liberty.

It has been thought by some, who take the same side with myself on this great question, that the argument from Scripture is an argument *only for Christians*—for believers in the authority of divine revelation. I grant, that they only will feel the obligation of that authority who admit its existence. But I am very far from thinking, that it is only in reasoning with them that the Scripture argument is of any use. I take up this argument, and on the ground of it make my appeal to the judgment and common sense of worldly men—of avowed infidels themselves. The subject under examination is—the propriety of a civil Establishment of *Christianity*. To what source of information, then,—to what standard of decision, should infidels and men of the world naturally expect to find Christians referring for the determination of such a question? To what source,—to what standard, but to that which they know Christians acknowledge as the inspired record of their principles? Can we marvel at a scornful

smile on the lips of such men, when they see those who make this acknowledgment, instead of coming, simply and at once, to the record, and abiding by it, roving after support to their cause in every other possible quarter? There are few things I should like better, than to have the judgment of a candid infidel on the contents of the christian records, in regard to the present controversy. With such a man, of course, it would not be a judgment of *authority*, but a judgment of *fact*:—not of the question, *Who teaches?* but of the question, *What is taught?* And even in dealing on the subject with statesmen,—although they should be thoroughly men of the world,—men who make no pretensions to saintship, or the spiritual power of religion,—men who are accustomed to canvass every subject, and settle every dispute, and adopt and prosecute every measure, on *political* grounds alone,—I should feel myself more than warranted in pressing the scripture argument. I know there are many who smile at this, as being, with mere politicians, the most incongruous and fruitless of all courses. The only considerations, it is alleged, that can weigh a feather with such men, are considerations of state policy;—of pecuniary calculation, of political expediency, or, at the very utmost, of the principles of reciprocal justice, the rights of conscience, or the claims of public good, according to the views they may entertain of it. I beg leave to differ. I feel that, in taking the high position of Bible authority, I have a vantage-ground of appeal to the sound sense of every thinking man. A statesman may think little about the Bible himself;

as a man, he may have no inclination to study it, and, in common with multitudes, may cover the absence of inclination under the plea of the want of leisure;—and, as an official man, he may think it comes not within the range of his cognizance;—it is his to look to the *law of the land*, as he finds it, and to maintain and amend the law;—it is his to look to the church, not as the *church of Christ*, but as the *Church of England*, the *Church of Scotland*, the *Church of Ireland*, recognised and established by that law,—founded and maintained by acts of the British parliament. Rarely is a statesman to be found, who ever thinks of looking further;—yet in the ear of every statesman should the truth be rung, that the christian church,—the kingdom of Jesus Christ, is no political institution:—that it is a spiritual community, founded by himself;—the only authority for whose *existence* is in the New Testament records;—and whose constitution and laws are to be found no where but there. A statesman possessed of sound sense and uprightness,—how hackneyed soever in the politics of this world, and imbued to the very core with the habits of official secularity, can understand such an appeal, and can be made sensible too of its reasonableness and force. And, should the statesmen of this world not be made to feel it, we deem it of the last consequence to press this scripture view of the argument upon the public mind, and especially on the minds of the really christian portion of the community,—with importunate solicitation, beseeching their attention to it. We have great confidence, we confess,

in the ultimate success of truth. It will force its way;—gradually it may be; but triumph at length it must.—But I shall be told, I am now proceeding on an assumption as yet unproved,—that truth lies on my side of the question. I grant the justice of the reproof. We are ever apt to assume what to our own minds is simple and clear. I would, in the mean time, then, simply be understood to say, that truth, on which side soever it may lie, must ultimately bear down opposition, and secure triumph. It would be distrusting heaven to doubt it.

The Scripture argument on this question is one which might be brought into very narrow compass. It is surely natural and reasonable, that, not being Jews but Christians, and the subject of our controversy relating to the constitution not of the Jewish but of the Christian church, we should have recourse, for the determination of the points in debate, to the New Testament rather than to the Old,—to the records of the law of Christ, than to those of the law of Moses,—to the accounts given us of the constitution of the permanent kingdom of heaven, than to those of the constitution of the ancient and temporary kingdom of Israel. But here I must premise an explanatory observation or two; being well aware of the injurious influence of any secret prejudice, or jealous surmise, resting in the mind, in preventing the correct apprehension, and still more the full legitimate effect, of every argument preceding its removal. It may be thought by some, that my apparent anxiety to keep by the New Testament, indicates a latent consciousness of im-

becility, were the appeal made to the Old. Why, it has been asked, set aside any portion of the Bible from its due authority; we have the whole; why not take the whole? My answer is—we *do* take the whole. We set aside no part from its due authority. It is precisely and specially our aim to discover the due authority of every part of it. The authority of every part we admit to be, in one respect, the same. It is the highest possible; for it is divine. In this view, there was the same authority in the Jewish dispensation as there is in the Christian,—in the institutes of Moses, as in those of Jesus. There is no question about this. The question relates exclusively, not to authority, but to the purpose of the divine Legislator—in regard to the permanent or the temporary obligation of his institutions. While we maintain the divine authority of the institutions themselves, as requiring the implicit obedience of those to whom they were given; yet, if they were intended to be temporary, we violate the same authority by making the obligation of them permanent. If they were meant for a particular people, and for a special purpose; we are chargeable with disobedience to the legislating authority, when we attempt to lay the obligation of them upon other peoples, and insist on their continuance after their avowed and definite object has been answered. The principles of moral rectitude are immutably the same; and all in the Old Testament that is directly of a moral nature, is permanently and universally binding. But no intelligent student of the Bible ever fancies, that, because

the offering of animal sacrifices was obligatory upon the Jews, it continues obligatory upon Christians. Every one is aware, that the offering of such a sacrifice now, would be as much a violation of the divine will, as the neglect to offer it would have been of old. There was authority for the observance; there is the same authority for the cessation. I do not *apply* the principle at present; the application will come afterwards. I am only solicitous, in the outset, to take off, from any mind in which it may exist, the impression that we deny, or hold lightly, the authority of the Old Testament. Far be it. What we plead for is,—and surely the reasonableness of the position will not be denied us,—that, in taking the Scriptures for our guide, we must take them with a due discrimination of the divine intention in their several parts; inasmuch as that may be right and beneficial in the circumstances in which divine wisdom appointed it, which may be wrong and detrimental in other circumstances; that may be wise and good for the time it was meant to last, and for the purposes it was intended to serve, which may be foolish and mischievous in other times, and for other ends. That "the things which were written aforetime were written for our learning," no one disputes; but, since we know that *all* was not intended to be permanent which the authority that wrote them instituted, the plain and simple inquiry is—*what is* and *what is not?* And this question, so far as our present controversy is concerned, we now leave for future application.

For the sake of distinctness, I propose to establish the three following positions:—

I. That in the New Testament, there is no recognition whatever of the power of civil rulers in matters of religion.

II. That in the New Testament, the maintenance and progress of the church's interests are, with all clearness and explicitness, authoritatively committed to the church itself.

III. That all imitation of the ancient Jewish constitution, in this particular, is, from its very nature, impossible; and, were it possible, would not be warrantable.

I. I am, *first*, to prove, That *in the New Testament there is no recognition of the power of civil rulers in matters of religion.*—But how, you may ask, am I to prove a negative? It would not be easy, certainly, nor, according to the understood laws of controversy, would it be at all incumbent, had not some of the advocates of Establishments actually pretended to find such recognition. Dr. C. was wiser; he makes no such attempt. He admits "the absence of any distinct and definite authority for an established church" in the New Testament; and he waives the whole discussion. But not so all. We have, at times, been charged with resting our cause on a *mere negation*—on the mere *silence* of the New Testament. How far this is true may appear under next particular. Meantime, it would, we think, have been prudent, if all the advocates of Establishments had, like Dr. C., admitted the silence

of the New Testament on their side of the question, and not attempted to go beyond the negation. It would have been no light thing had they been able to make out even silence, and to show that there was nothing at least against them. But it would be a hard task to make the value less than it is of such proofs of the religious power of the civil magistrate, as those I am about to mention. The worth of a cipher is incapable of reduction; and it would be worse than a waste of time to spend it in proving nothing not to be something.

We have been repeatedly and seriously reminded that it is the duty of every man, in every relation of life, in every sphere, whether private or public, which he is called to fill,—to "do all to the glory of God;" that is, to fulfil all his functions under the influence of religious principle; and that from this obligation the magistrate—the christian magistrate—is not, surely, to be considered as exempted. Who ever said that he was? Beyond question, it is the duty of the magistrate, in transacting the affairs of the nation, to act under the influence of the fear of God, to acknowledge God's supremacy, to seek God's glory. But what of that? What have the personal principles by which the individual is influenced in fulfilling any class of duties to do with the specific nature of the duties themselves? A trust is committed to him. The question is, What is that trust? what is its nature? and what are the limits of its appropriate functions? In what way soever these questions are answered,—whether more widely, or more restrictedly; whether the trust is

confined to civil functions, or made to include both civil and sacred; the answer is altogether independent of the principles of personal character, by which the administrator of them is actuated. The merchant is bound, in the conduct of his mercantile affairs, in every department of them, to act from the fear of God, in obedience to his authority, and with an eye to his glory: but this does not alter the nature of his business. Christian servants are represented as "serving the Lord Christ;" and whatsoever they do, they are commanded to "do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men." Does this change the character of the menial relation? Does it cease to be a civil relation, when the duties required in it are performed from religious motives? No, surely. And so, neither does the office of the civil magistrate change its nature, according to the principles by which the administrator of its functions is actuated. The obligation of him who holds the office to discharge its functions in the fear of God, leaves the question respecting the nature and extent of these functions untouched. It no more proves that, as a magistrate, he has officially to do with the religion of his subjects, or that his authority extends to things sacred, than the same obligation proves the merchant to have, commercially, to do with the religion of his customers; or the servant to have, menially, to do with the religion of his employers. —I appeal to you, if this be not sheer trifling.

An argument has also been drawn from what Paul says of "the powers that be," in the beginning of the 13th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. He

there represents the civil magistrate as "the minister of God" to his subjects, "*for good.*" And therefore, since religion is a good, and the greatest good of all, it cannot be excluded from his prerogative, or rather from his official cognizance and authoritative promotion. The conclusion has, in the terms employed to express it, been placed in somewhat different aspects; but such is its substantial import; on which we offer three observations.— In the *first* place, Civil privileges and religious benefits both come under the general category of good. Now, rulers in the church, the ministers of Christ in his spiritual kingdom, are certainly appointed "*for good,*" as well as rulers in the state. If, therefore, with regard to the latter, it follows, from the unrestricted generality of this expression, that they are ministers for *all kinds* of good, the same inference will be equally legitimate as to the former. But if it does not follow that the rulers of the church are entitled to interfere officially in *civil* concerns, as little will it follow that the rulers of the state are entitled to interfere officially in *religious* concerns. Each in his own department may be a minister *for good*, without the necessity of either being a minister for good *of every kind.*

*Secondly:* — It is very obvious, that among the "powers that be," of whom the Apostle speaks, those civil rulers must be included, to whom the believers addressed by him were at the time subject, namely, the Roman Emperor Nero, and the provincial governors of his appointment, and from

whom there was a right of appeal to himself "as supreme." To deny that the exhortation was intended to apply to them at the time, — that is, to apply to them at all,—is to expose the Apostle to a charge of equivocation and evasive duplicity, unworthy of him as an honest man, infinitely inconsistent with his character as an inspired ambassador of Jesus Christ. Now, how unutterable the absurdity of supposing, that when he speaks of such heathen rulers as "ministers of God for good," and that too to his own people, to Christians, he has any respect to their authority *in religion!* And if the words are not, and cannot be, meant to apply in any such sense *to them*, they were not meant to be so interpreted *at all.* That which was not applicable to the part, could not be applicable to the whole; and, as the Apostle is treating of civil rulers in general, that which is not true of all is true of none.

*Thirdly*:—It is a common maxim in reasoning, that what proves too much proves nothing. Let us see, then, how far this principle of interpretation will lead us. If the civil magistrate's being "the minister of God for good," means for every kind of good, and, κατ' ἐξοχὴν, for the greatest of all good, then his being "a revenger to execute wrath upon him that *doeth evil*,"—"a terror, not to good works, *but to the evil*,"—must mean every kind of evil, and especially the greatest of all evil. Irreligion being the greatest evil, as religion is the greatest good; we thus have the civil magistrate "*bearing the sword*," in a special

manner, against every description of heresy in sentiment, and impiety in deportment. Of all such heresy or impiety the magistrate himself must, of course, be the judge. So that here we have the pestilent and deadly element of the entire system of persecution for conscience' sake stamped with the seal of Heaven; the civil ruler, be his character and his principles what they may, whether a heathen Nero or a most christian "defender of the faith," empowered to determine what is truth and what is error in doctrine, and what is right and what is wrong in modes of worship and ecclesiastical government; and to use the sword, which he must not "bear in vain," in enforcing, by all needful pains and penalties, even unto death, conformity to the creed and forms of his sovereign enactment! I should certainly consider myself as offering an insult to the understandings of my audience, were I seriously to set about a vindication of the New Testament from the atrocious calumny of containing such a doctrine. Yet from such a conclusion *some* of our northern advocates of Establishments have not shrunk. They have actually interpreted the passages as including every kind of good and every kind of evil which the civil magistrate, in his official capacity, possesses the means of imparting on the one hand, or of repressing and putting down on the other; and have pronounced every restrictive interpretation "violent and arbitrary;" and they have supported the interpretation by the *presumptive* example of the Jewish rulers under the old dispensation, mistaken views of which, as

I may hereafter have occasion to show, have been the secret spring whence have flowed all the bitter waters of intolerance, from the commencement of the christian dispensation to the present hour. The error has been a fatal one, cumulative of woe. Distant may the time be, when the civil rulers of these realms shall lend a favourable ear to such ill-omened doctrines! The further exposure of their mischievous nature, and of their utter destitution of all Bible authority, I must reserve till another time. At present I can only observe,—and it is no small comfort to make the observation with confidence,—that they come too late in the thirty-ninth year of the nineteenth century; and that, whatever acceptance they may have found in Britain in days of yore, the knowledge of the true principles of religious liberty has become too extensively and influentially prevalent to admit of their acceptance again; that the seeds of this tree of death, which has borne far more than "twelve manner of fruits," all noxious and deadly, and whose leaves have been, not for the healing, but for the poisoning and desolating of the nations, will never more find a soil in which they can vegetate, within the circling shores of our free and favoured land!

Other passages there are, which have been adduced from the New Testament, in support of the civil magistrate's authority in religious matters; but if, in controversial discussions, there are some things with which we find it difficult to grapple, on account of their substantial and giant strength; there are some too, with which to grapple effectually

or at all is no less difficult, on account of their impalpable and shadowy evanescence. There is no grasping, no feeling, no holding them. They have no body, no substance. Even of these there are but few. I take one as a specimen. The Apostle Paul, in his epistle to Titus, gives command—"that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." Well, many of you may say,—And what of that? Where is the proof there of the religious authority of civil rulers? You may well ask the question. I frankly confess, I should never have discovered the lurking prop of that authority, had it not been pointed out. I grant, however, that our perspicacity is generally much shrewder on our own side of a question, than on its opposite. It is always, at the same time, a ground for suspecting the soundness of a proof, when it requires special ingenuity to elicit it from the quarter whence it is sought; and it is always, too, an indication of the felt helplessness of their cause, on the part of those by whom it is adduced. The argument is this:—"That what Christians are here to pray for, magistrates must be bound to promote as their end,—and this is, not simply a quiet and peaceable life, but all *godliness* and *honesty*." From this it is concluded, that it is a part of the official charge of civil rulers to look after the interests of "godliness;" which, of course, amounts to the same thing with taking religion under their political patronage, and legislating for its

maintenance and advancement! Truly the authors and adopters of such an argument (and when I announce the names of Dr. M'Crie and Dr. Inglis, you will be satisfied that I am not combating with inferior and disreputable antagonists, but with two of the ablest men of their day), must, when they had recourse to it, have been not a little put to it for better support. The argument must be considered as resting on the circumstance, that the prayers enjoined to be offered up for "kings and all in authority" include a prayer for their conversion; since it is immediately added, "for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." It is only, of course, on the supposition of the *conversion* of the heathen magistrates that we can for a moment imagine such men as those who found their argument on this passage to represent it as an object of desire that they should take any charge of the promotion of godliness, or of the conservation and advancement of the interests of religion. But, was there no other way in which the Christians might be permitted to "live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty," except by the conversion of such rulers to the christian faith, and their becoming legislators for Christianity, instead of opposers of it? — There *was* another. There was nothing more necessary than their *keeping to their own proper province, and letting religion alone.* If, in the providence of God, the rulers were induced to do this, it was all that was requisite to the Christians

leading the life which Paul describes. They were themselves men of peace—the quiet in the land. It was not in their principles to interfere with and disturb civil governments; their prayer was, that civil governments might be graciously prevented from disturbing and molesting *them*.—It was a maxim of this same Apostle, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." It was their "godliness," then, and their "honesty" (σεμνότης, their grave and upright decorum,—the word perhaps approaching nearly in meaning to what we designate *seriousness*, certainly implying, though not, by etymology, expressing, a calm, reverential, and steadfast adherence to their principles; the *veneration*, which the word does express, extending from God to his truths and laws) it was these that exposed them to persecution — that thus prevented their living a "quiet and peaceable life." All that they wanted, then, as far as they themselves were concerned, was, that the heathen rulers would allow them to live *godly*, and yet to live quietly,—not disturbing their peace on account of their religion.—The Apostle's injunction, while it relates, no doubt, to future, relates also, and immediately, to present time—"That *we* should live quiet and peaceable lives." Now, surely, no reasonable man can imagine, that, even during the lives of himself and his fellow-apostles,—the divinely-constituted vicegerents of the exalted Redeemer, who "sat on thrones judging the twelve tribes of the spiritual Israel,"—Paul prayed, or instructed others to pray, that the legislative and judicial authority, in any thing

relating to the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ, should be taken out of their hands by converted heathen magistrates;—that they should have any such associates in their jurisdiction. And if there was to be no right of interference, in any way, with the constitution that had been divinely given to the church of God; what could there be further, than letting the church alone, and, in the exercise of their civil authority, protecting from molestation and injury this class as well as others of their subjects, in the conscientious observance of their worship, and discharge of their christian duties?—That this was all the Apostle desired for the kingdom of Christ, at the hand of civil rulers (the modern *laissez nous faire*), may be further evident from the fact, that, whenever there came to be the assumption of more,—whenever Christianity became the state religion, and was taken under the legislative patronage of the governments of this world,—although there might be a temporary cessation of imperial and legally-authorized persecution,—the entire subsequent history of the church, in all its alliances with the kingdoms of this world (denominated, merely from these alliances, *christian nations*), affords an incessant series of melancholy proofs, that the results were neither peace and quietness, nor godliness and honesty; but, in innumerable ways, the reverse of both.

II. I proceed to my *second* position—That *in the New Testament, the maintenance and progress of the church's interests are, with all clearness and explicitness, authoritatively committed to the church itself.*

You will all perceive, intuitively, the propriety of my confining myself to this one point. It were altogether foreign to my present purpose to enter into any discussion of the constitution of the church, in regard to government and discipline, as established in the New Testament; whether it should be episcopalian, presbyterian, congregational, or a compound of any two, or of all of them. Voluntaryism is not confined to the adherents of any one of these various forms of church polity, but is maintained by adherents of them all, and is equally capable of being reduced to practice under one as under another of them. All such discussion, therefore, would be more than uselessly, would be mischievously, invidious. In defending the Voluntary Principle, there is no reason why I should embroil the Voluntaries. In this controversy, they are to be regarded, not as episcopalians, presbyterians, or independents, but in their common character of dissenters from the principle of Establishments. The question is not between different forms of church order, but, in well-understood phraseology, between CHURCH and DISSENT.

When, on such a subject, we seek to ascertain from the New-Testament records, "what the will of the Lord is," we are authorized, on the most obvious principles of common sense, to assume, that, in the constitutional administration of the church, *facts* are of the same authority as precepts; *examples*, as commands. This needs no proof. Whatever is recorded as having been done under the direction of Apostles, must have been done according to the

intimated will of their Master. They "had the mind of Christ;" and what they "*ordained* in all the churches," may be satisfactorily learned from the history of what was actually *done* in all the churches; unless it can be imagined that, in fixing the constitution of the spiritual kingdom, they followed, in some things, their own mind, and not the mind of their divine Lord; exhibiting in the working machine something different from the prescribed model. But if it involves, as it unquestionably does, a contradiction, to suppose anything done that did not imply a command to do it; then, in what was done, we have what was ordained; in the record of *facts* we have a record of *laws*.

On this principle, then, let any one read the New Testament, and say what he finds there. Besides the absence, admitted by Dr. C., of every thing like authority for civil interference, he will find a community entirely *per se*, quite *unique* in its character, and completely independent in the means of its support and enlargement; independent, I mean, of all human aid from without itself; a voluntary society, of which no one was a member otherwise than by free choice—by God's choice of him, and his choice of God; a self-endowed, self-sustained, self-extending community; its resources within itself; its expansive energies within itself; its sole reliance, for the protection of its existence, for the supply of its treasury, for the success of its efforts, for the vital efficacy of its principles, for the multiplication of its subjects, for the general prosperity of its interests, not on favour, or policy, or wealth, or might, of

the governments of this world, but on the love, the power, the wisdom, and the faithful promises, of its exalted and ever-living Head, the "King of kings and Lord of lords." This is the representation that pervades the New Testament, its histories and its epistles alike. Nothing else is to be found there. I speak now simply of the fact; and the fact is beyond all question. To attempt a proof, would be like attempting to convince a man, whose eyes are sound and open, of the light of noon. No one that reads the record can doubt.

But we have more than this general pervading evidence of fact; we have the evidence of clearly-stated principle, and of explicit precept. The principles on which the gospel and gospel ordinances are to be supported, are laid down in the New Testament with all possible simplicity and precision. I shall not dwell, at present, on the great general maxims and motives of liberality to every good work, with which it abounds; but shall confine myself to the one subject of the *support of the christian ministry*. A "sure legal provision" for that ministry is, according to Dr. C., the essential element of a civil establishment of Christianity. Let us see then, from the only authoritative source, what, on this point, is the "law of the kingdom."—We have two things plainly stated, and they are all that can be required; first, the *general ordinance for the support of such a ministry;* and secondly, the *source of the supply.*

The former of these we find in terms as explicit as could well be devised, in the midst of a spirited

vindication of its reasonableness and propriety, on the grounds of generosity, equity, and the example of ancient institutions — 1 Cor. ix. 14: "EVEN SO HATH THE LORD ORDAINED, THAT THEY WHO PREACH THE GOSPEL SHOULD LIVE OF THE GOSPEL." This, then, is the great general ordinance, or standing law,—that there should be a ministry, and that those who constitute that ministry should be supported, or supplied with a sufficiency of temporal maintenance, in giving themselves to the discharge of its functions. I hesitate, whether I should at all notice the suggestion that has actually been thrown out and argued, that the words "*even so*," οὕτω καὶ, "so also," which have immediate reference to the ancient law respecting the support of the Jewish priesthood, should be interpreted, as not only enjoining or ordaining the support of the christian ministry, but also a conformity to that law in the *mode* of their support. It should surely be enough to demonstrate the absurdity of such an interpretation, that the thing is *impossible*. "Know ye not that they who minister in holy things, live of the temple? and they who wait on the altar are partakers with the altar?" The latter of these phrases, "being partakers with the altar," has manifest reference to those parts of the instituted and the spontaneous sacrifices which, by the law, were the allotted portion of the priests and their families. How is *this* mode of support to be practised, under a dispensation from which all such sacrifices are peremptorily and for ever excluded? "Living of the temple," may be a phrase of more

general import; but the other ought to be its interpreter. There can be no living of the temple, any more than of the altar, when both temple and altar are no more. To suppose the Apostle to inculcate here the obligation of *tithe-paying* under the new economy, in conformity to the practice of the old, is to represent him as announcing, with all authority, as an ordinance of Christ, *what was never put in practice*, not even while the Apostles themselves were alive to enforce it. There is not the remotest hint of obedience to it having ever been required; nor one solitary instance of conformity to it on record, in the entire New-Testament history of the early churches. Had there been, in that history, anything indicating a correspondence, in this particular, between the practice of the christian and that of the Mosaic church, this would have given some countenance to such an interpretation of the Apostle's words; although, even then, it would have been a very undefined and unwonted mode of expressing his meaning. But not only is there nothing in the record to favour it, there is every thing there could well be against it; namely, the undeniable historical fact of an entirely different practice, and the appeals to the principles of generosity, and justice, and love to Christ, and gratitude for his grace, and zeal for his glory, by which, under the influence of a "willing mind," that practice was stimulated and maintained.—But this leads me to notice the *second* of the particulars mentioned, namely,

*The source of the supply.* Had there been no more than the general ordinance of the Lord, that

"they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel," without any specification of the quarter from which the support should come, we should, even in that case, from the reason of the thing, and from considering to whom the epistles containing the injunctions and the motives to compliance with it, were addressed, have had good ground on which to conclude, that the supply was to be found within the church itself. But we have intimations as explicit on this point, as on the other; I refer you to two simple and decisive texts. The first occurs in the same passage with the general ordinance for the support of the ministry, and throws the clearest light upon its intended provisions (1 Cor. ix. 11, 12): "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather?" These questions most emphatically show the ground on which the Apostle rests the right, or power, which he asserts. It is the principle of just and generous recompense; the claim to a smaller, in return for a greater, good. It is they on whom the labour is expended, whom he represents as bound to recompense and maintain the labourer. The second of his two questions, "*Are not we rather?*" assumes the principle, that the greater the amount of labour, the stronger became the claim to recompense. If others—we rather. Why? Certainly, because he had laboured more than others, for *their* benefit. In the same way, in the precept of Moses, of which he here applies and enforces the principle, "Thou shalt not

muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn;" the corn which the ox eats, is that of the owner for whom he performs the work.

The other text is Gal. vi. 6: "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." This is not less explicit. The principle is the same; the practice founded upon it, the same. We may avail ourselves of the explanation of the words given by a justly eminent Church-of-England commentator, Mr. Scott: "The Lord hath appointed the office of the ministry for the conversion of sinners, and the edification of believers; and accordingly, the Apostle exhorted the Galatians to contribute to the comfortable maintenance of their teachers, who instructed them in the word of God; communicating to them a proportion of their temporal good things, according to their ability."

Such is the New-Testament principle, at once explicit and pervading; and such are the precepts, in harmony with the principle. There are other passages besides, in which attention to the temporal subsistence and comfort of pastors is evidently included, in terms of a more general complexion:—but on these I need not dwell. I give as an example—1 Thess. v. 12, 13: "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them who labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love, for their work's sake."—Well, but—(Dr. C. may say)—this is all *internal voluntaryism*—voluntaryism *ab intra*. The answer is—supposing it were understood thus

restrictively, as ordaining the support by each christian congregation of its own pastor or pastors, we should be no little way, at any rate, towards a scriptural settlement of the question of *endowments*. No man, however, who reads the New Testament, even in the most superficial manner, can be at a loss for evidence, of the more extensive obligation, and the more expansive influence, of christian charity. There is nothing, either in principle, in precept, or in example, to confine the duty or the privilege of supporting the gospel, in any particular church, to the members of that church itself. We find the church at Antioch sending, by the hands of Barnabas and Saul, their voluntary contributions for the relief of their brethren in Judea, in the prospect of a predicted scarcity; and the same benevolent part, at the solicitation of the Apostle Paul himself, was acted by all the churches of the Gentiles. If *external* voluntaryism thus exerted itself for the *temporal* wants of others, we have in the fact a principle involved, which applies *à fortiori* to those of a spiritual nature. And indeed, who will venture to say, whether, and how far, the very supply of the temporal might not be in part intended, to enable the brethren, at the same time, without the pressure of embarrassing difficulty in their season of trial, to provide comfortably for the maintenance of the spiritual? The principle of *the strong helping the weak*, is, in the plainest terms, laid down by the Apostle Paul, when he says to the Corinthians—"For I mean not that other men be eased, and you burdened: but by an equality, that now at this

time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality." 2 Cor. viii. 13, 14. How beautiful the recognition, in these words, of the obligation lying upon the entire christian community, to maintain the interests of their Lord's cause, by a reciprocation of benevolent assistance, and a generous combination of common resources! We ought not to confine the idea of voluntaryism *ab intra* to *particular congregations*. The whole church of God—the entire collective body of the faithful—is *one community*,—one in principle, in character, in interests:—"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as they are called in one hope of their calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in them all." No voluntaryism should be regarded as *ab extra*, which is within the bounds of this great spiritual community. One christian society helping another, ought to be held *internal voluntaryism*, just as much as one individual of the same congregation helping another. We have external voluntaryism, not when any one congregation goes for aid beyond itself; but when *the church* goes beyond itself. Not that what comes from without, is in all cases to be refused. If He who has the hearts of all men in his hands "stirs up the spirit" of any who are not within the pale of the church, to contribute "of their own proper good," for helping forward one or another department of her interests,—it is well. I see no good reason why such aid, when offered, should be declined. But

still, the Apostolic epistles are addressed, not to nations, nor to sections of nations,—not to the promiscuous inhabitants of whole countries, or of territorial subdivisions of such countries,—but to the Christians, the believers, the saints, the faithful brethren,—"all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity,"—"all that in every place call upon his name." Whatever others, in the providence of God, may be led spontaneously to do, it is on these that the *duty* is laid. It is from them that the free-will offering, in return for the grace of the gospel, is specially expected. The law that demands it is the law of love. It is binding, yet must be voluntary: a debt of justice, but to be discharged from unconstrained gratitude.—Among all these there should subsist that "equality" of which the Apostle speaks,—a universal reciprocity of interests,—so that, in the same way as of old the Gentile brethren helped the Jewish, and the Jewish were expected, in a change of circumstances, to help the Gentiles, every section of the great community of the faithful should hold itself in readiness to extend the assistance it is able to give, whenever it is needed,—looking for a return of the favour, should the alternations of a changeful providence come to require it. In this enlarged acceptation should the beautiful image be applied, by which the spiritual body of Christ is compared to the corporeal frame; "many members—one body;" in which "the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you." As the hand is guided by the eye, and the eye is

guarded by the hand; as the plans of the head are executed by the activity of the feet, and the movements of the feet are safely directed by the head; so, in the spiritual body, "all the members should have the same care one for another;" no one portion of the community "calling ought of the things which they possess their own," but all holding the motto—"*non sibi sed toti*,"—and using whatever they have, as bestowed for the general good. This is what we find both taught and exemplified in the New Testament; first in regard to the church in Jerusalem, then the only one,—and afterwards, on a more extended scale, in regard to all the sections of the multiplying community.

Let it not by any be alleged, that, if the support of the gospel be obtained, it is of little consequence *by whom*; that if the thing is done, it matters little *how*. There cannot be a more serious mistake. What! is it of no moment, whether a thing be done in Christ's way, or in ours? Surely, if the Head of the church has not only commanded the thing to be done, but has pointed out the way of doing it,—*his* way must be the best, and the only right way. Had he given no directions, but only required that, *in some way or other*, the support and propagation of his gospel should be attended to,—then should it have been not only competent, but incumbent, to apply our wits to the devising of the most suitable and efficient mode of effecting the end. But if, both by precept and example, he has plainly intimated his will, our only business is, to follow his prescription. We have no right to

change it,—none to substitute another for it. We cannot do so, without the impious presumption of preferring our own wisdom to that of Christ. And if he has laid a charge upon *us*, there is no legitimate principle on which we can establish a right to transfer it from ourselves to others. Neither individuals nor collective bodies can have any such right. The voluntary support of the gospel by the church herself, is as much an ordinance of Christ, as the Lord's Supper is. The one is his ordinance, for maintaining and extending his church; the other is his ordinance, for perpetuating the remembrance of himself. "Had Jesus Christ," it has justly been observed,* "merely stated, that it was his will that his death should be commemorated in an appropriate emblematical institution, then it would have been proper to have endeavoured to discover what particular emblematical service would have best gained the end; but now that he has bid us 'eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of him,' the Christian who neglects thus to commemorate him, and the Christian who would seek to commemorate him in any other way, would equally violate the law, and contemn the authority of the Lord." The ordinance of commemoration is not more explicitly instituted than is the ordinance of support and extension; nor does there exist any liberty to innovate on the latter any more than on the former, or, indeed, on any of the express

* By my much esteemed friend, the Rev. Dr. John Brown, of Edinburgh, in his able work on "The Law of Christ respecting Civil Obedience," p. 475, 3d Edit.

and exemplified prescriptions of the King of Zion. The substitution of a *compulsory provision* by the *civil* community, in lieu of what was originally ordained—*the spontaneous generosity of the spiritual*, is not a mere slight and partial alteration of the original plan; it is the substitution of one entirely different,—opposite, indeed, in its most essential features—in its *source*, and in its *principle*. It is no longer the ordinance of Christ; but a human invention in its stead. I am persuaded, there are many Christians, — genuine spiritual subjects of Jesus, by whom the matter has never been duly regarded in this obvious, but important light. Would not the Lord, who is jealous of his own authority and his own institutions, say to them—"Who hath required this at your hands?" "Full well have ye made void the commandment of God that ye may keep your own tradition." And while there is no right, on the part of the church, to transfer to others a charge committed to herself; we may well ask, besides, where is the gratitude, where the generosity, where the becoming sense of obligation to her Lord, in such a relinquishment of the trust reposed in her by himself? In her hands,—that is, in the hands of his own subjects,—the trust was appropriate—clearly where it ought to be. In throwing it into other hands,—into the unhallowed hands of secular and compulsory authority, — they have laid themselves open to the charge of a treachery and a meanness, for the adequate reprobation of which there are not in language terms sufficiently strong. They have destroyed the seemly appropriateness of their Lord's

institution; they have violated alike the claims of his authority and his love; and they have, to a great extent, defeated the very end which he had in view, in committing his cause, with all its interests, to themselves. It was evidently one of his purposes to present to the world, in the fellowship of his church, and in the practical working of the spiritual affections by which its members are united, *an exhibition of the power of principle.* By the transference of which we complain, the exhibition is lost, the purpose frustrated, and "his glory is given to another." O how galling to the spirit of every honest and ingenuous subject of his, when, instead of the church bringing credit to her Lord, by showing to the world the energy and the resources of love to his name, she allows herself,—by employing the sword of the civil magistrate, to exact the support of ordinances, and the means of her extension, from aliens,—to become the taunt of all the infidels and worldlings in the land,—"their proverb, their by-word, and their hissing,"—telling her, with a sardonic sneer, half bitter, half complacent, that she cannot get on without *their* help,—that her cause must be indebted for its support to extortion from her enemies,—that the subjects of the god of this world must be taxed, and their coffers forcibly unlocked, for the replenishing of the treasury of the God of Zion! This is the church's shame,—her burning shame. Dr. C. calls it the "earth helping the woman:" I call it the church distrusting and dishonouring her Lord, and doing despite to all the principles of his kingdom.—Let

those who "tremble at the word of the Lord" judge between us! I care not for any judgment that is not founded in veneration for the imperative dictates of that word. But I feel that I am falling into a course of reflection, which may be more appropriate when the remainder of the Scripture argument has been considered, and the reasonings of the advocates of Establishments from the Old Testament, to which, as their palladium, they are ever fond to betake themselves, have been disposed of.

To this we shall proceed in the next lecture.

# LECTURE III.

SCRIPTURE ARGUMENT CONTINUED.—OLD TESTAMENT.—JEWISH CONSTITUTION. — BRIEF NOTICES OF OTHER POINTS. — ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS.

In the last lecture, after a variety of general observations necessary to the introduction and subsequent elucidation of the Scripture argument on the great question before us, we proposed, for the sake of distinctness, to make good the three following positions:—1. That in the New Testament there is no recognition whatever of the power of civil rulers in matters of religion. 2. That in the New Testament the maintenance and progress of the church's interests are, with all clearness and explicitness, authoritatively committed to the church itself. 3. That all imitation of the ancient Jewish constitution, in this particular, is, from its very nature, impossible; and were it possible, would not be warrantable. We have disposed of the *first* and *second*, in as far as the simple illustration and proof of them is concerned, leaving general deductions till afterwards; and, having no time for recapitulation, we now proceed directly to *the third*.

While Dr. Chalmers, as we have seen, admits "the absence of any distinct and definite authority for an

Established Church in the New Testament," he at the same time affirms this distinct and definite authority to "*stand forth unequivocally in almost every book of the Old.*" I presume that, when Dr. Chalmers wrote these words, the reference, in his mind, was to the *Jewish economy*,—to the national constitution of the church under the dispensation of Moses. And to that it is my purpose to bend my chief attention; being firmly convinced that, if the argument derived from *that* source can be satisfactorily set aside, there will be little left remaining in the Old Testament, of which our friends, on the opposite side, will be able, with any plausibility or effect, to avail themselves. This may truly be called their Old-Testament palladium, from which, if they can be driven, they will find no materials to construct a refuge ever so frail for their favourite hypothesis. On this subject, then, we lay down the three following positions:—1. That the Jewish Establishment was one which, from its very nature, cannot be imitated. 2. That in the prophetic anticipations of New-Testament times, intimations were given of an entire change of system. And, 3. That when these times came, there actually was a change accordingly.

You may think, and not without reason, that if the *first* of these positions can be established, there will be little need for the establishment of the second and the third. The first, however, will receive confirmation from the second and the third, and the connexion of all the three will impart the greater conclusiveness to our argument,

by evincing the harmony of all its parts, and its agreement, throughout, with the entire scheme of the divine administration.

1. I am first, then, to show you, that the Jewish constitution was one which, from its very nature, cannot be imitated.—The argument for Establishments derived from the Mosaic economy is capable of being made to assume a very plausible aspect. There was a National Establishment in Israel: the God of Israel could not give the sanction of his authority, by direct institution and constant support, to what was, in the very principle of it, wrong: we have, therefore, in this recorded case, an example of a national religion, and of a national establishment of that religion, possessing the full weight of divine authority, and more than warranting our imitation.

This, I say, looks plausible, and sounds very much like a fair syllogistic conclusion. But there is a fallacy, and such a fallacy as does not merely weaken, but absolutely nullify, the argument. The fallacy lies in what I may call the major proposition—"There was a National Establishment in Israel." The fallacy is not that of a *false*, but of a *defective* proposition. It contains truth, but not the whole truth; and the portion of truth which is wanting is so essential as, whenever it is supplied, to annihilate and reverse the conclusion. The proposition ought to be, not, "There was a *National Establishment* in Israel," but, "There was a *Theocracy* in Israel." We grant it was a National Establishment, but it was a National

Establishment of a character so peculiar and *unique* as to place it beyond the reach of imitation, — beyond the possibility of man's ever, by any legislation of his, instituting any thing like it. We deny the resemblance between modern Establishments and the Jewish. They are not only not the same thing; they are essentially distinct. There are two points of difference between them, of which each is by itself sufficient to destroy every pretension to identity. Modern Establishments are destitute of what formed the most essential element of the Jewish: and they have in them, as one of their own essential elements, what the Jewish never at any time admitted.

We say, first, that in modern Establishments, the essential element of the Jewish is necessarily wanting. This is so clear, as to render it quite surprising that the advocates of the former should for an instant attempt to maintain the ground of imitation. It will not do to suppress,—as if it were a mere minor point of circumstantial difference, an ingredient of little moment, that might be separated from the constitution without materially affecting its character,—that which really constituted its divine peculiarity,—that which, instead of being a mere decoration, a mere carved ornament upon a pillar, or in the groin of an arch, was at once the foundation and the topstone of the entire superstructure. It will not do to call that *imitation*, in which the very essence of the thing imitated is of necessity wanting. I grant that Jehovah instituted a national church; but then he instituted such a church, *with*

*himself as the supreme Head* of ecclesiastical and civil government in the nation; conducting his administration, in both departments, by a system of supernatural interposition and immediate manifestation of his presence and authority, such as we mean by a theocracy;—the nation itself by this means sustaining the two-fold character of the *Church* and the *State:* the church, in its relation to Jehovah as its *God*,—the state, in relation to Jehovah as its *King*. Our question, then, is—*Can* this be imitated? Comes it at all within the range of the imitable? Is the conclusion a legitimate one,—that, because Jehovah instituted, and of course approved, a national church, *with* such a theocratic superintendence, he must, therefore, be considered as sanctioning the institution of one *without* it? Is the difference between the two cases indeed so trivial and circumstantial, as not at all to affect the validity of any inference from the one to the other? That God instituted a national church where the government was *divine*, must surely form a more than questionable ground for concluding that he approves of a national church where the government is merely *human*. So far from the difference being immaterial, it amounts to the difference between human and divine. That, surely, may be a right and safe constitution under the management of God, which is the very reverse of right and safe under the management of men. Instead of our being taught the propriety of uniting the church and state in the latter predicament, may not the legitimate

lesson read to us by the Jewish constitution be, that in no other circumstances than under his own immediate superintendence, is such a union of the civil and the sacred admissible with benefit, or with safety? Seeing the only instance of an Establishment that has had the sanction of divine authority is an Establishment under a theocracy,—who will undertake to prove, that the theocracy is not the very thing necessary to its having his approbation?

It will not be required of me to prove that such an Establishment is not susceptible of imitation. It can be imitated by none but by God himself. God himself can again, if he will, institute a theocracy. Were he to adopt another nation as his peculiar people; place his name, and institute special forms of worship, amongst them; manifest his presence in appropriate symbols; become himself, not their God only, but their Judge, and Lawgiver, and King, assuming, in a miraculous administration, the reins of both civil and ecclesiastical authority; and, while conducting his government by human vicegerents, ever maintaining and vindicating his own authority by supernatural intervention:—we should then have something deserving to be called a counterpart to the Mosaic constitution—the ancient union of church and state. But to call our modern Establishments imitations of the Jewish, is to impose upon ourselves by a mere correspondence of names, while the very essence of the thing imitated,—that which constituted it what it was,—is wanting in the pretended imitation.

And as there was thus the *existence* of one ingre-

dient in the Jewish Establishment constituting an essential distinction between it and every other pretending to be an imitation of it; so was there, I observe, secondly, the *absence* of another,—of another, which is one of the very principles on which every human Establishment of religion must be considered as resting;—so that what essentially belonged to it belongs not at all to them, and what essentially belongs to them belonged not at all to it:—there was, under the Jewish economy, no such thing as *human legislation* in regard to religion. This is clear. It arose from the very fact of its being a theocracy. The laws, both of church and state,—or rather of the nation in its twofold capacity, as the church of God and a civil community,—were all divine—all from God himself. The judges and the kings were not legislators. The laws were in the Pentateuch—in the inspired books of Moses; just as the laws of the kingdom of Christ are in the Gospels and Epistles, the inspired books of Apostles and Evangelists. If ever any changes were introduced, it was by immediate divine intimation. The judges and kings had no authority whatever to enact a single statute of their own, or to abridge, enlarge, or in any way alter, those which had been laid down; no authority to innovate on any one article either of the principles or the practices of the prescribed constitution. They were the mere executive, enforcing divinely enacted laws by divinely instituted sanctions. They could neither introduce a new law, nor a new punishment. Nor were they, under that peculiar economy, even the sole exe-

cutive. In consistency with the idea of a theocracy, or system of divine administration, there was, in many cases, an executive above them—an executive directly divine;—an interposition of Heaven, in the way of judicial infliction, both on individuals in special cases, and on the nation at large in times of general idolatry and defection;—sometimes upon the supreme magistrates themselves, when they presumed, in their audacious self-will, to exceed their powers, and to diverge from the divine prescriptions. But what now would any civil Establishment be, without human legislation? On what is any existing Establishment founded, but on such legislation? What is the basis on which the British Establishments rest, but acts of the British Parliament? Where is there any thing analogous to this in the Jewish economy? Where was the Israelitish court that had a right to frame the constitution of a church in one iota different from the divinely recorded model? And yet, under the christian economy, we are to have a power of legislating for the church, vested, not only in ecclesiastical, but in civil courts!—The *power* may exist in both: of the *right* we deny the existence in either. The constitution and laws of the church are as much fixed by the divine oracles under the new dispensation, as they were under the old. And since the death of the last Apostle,—since the completion of the christian canon,—there has no where existed a right to enact a single law for the kingdom of Christ; neither in the person of any individual functionary, nor in any ecclesiastical council, provincial or

ecumenical; nor in any assembly or court of civil jurisdiction. *What* those laws are, is not my present question:—it is rather, *where* they are, and whether any existing authority is entitled to add to them, or to take from them. To suppose any such authority, is not to follow the Jewish model, but to go aside from it, or beyond it; and to admit a power over the laws of Christ, such as never was permitted over the laws of Moses.

And in this connexion it may be further observed, that by the advocates of civil Establishments of religion, a right is demanded and pleaded for on behalf of civil magistrates, under the christian dispensation, such as never belonged to any magistrate under the Jewish;—the right, namely, of determining the religion of the community over which, in providence, they have been called to preside. Now this was a right which no judge, or monarch, or court, in Israel ever possessed. Of that community, the religion, in all its principles, and in all its observances, was authoritatively fixed and prescribed by Jehovah himself. The reason is just what has already been stated, that that community constituted both a nation and a church. The nation was the church, and the church was the nation. And this is another point in which imitation is impossible. The New Testament does not legislate for nations. There was no nation, or civil community, which it regarded as a church, and for which, in this capacity, it prescribed an ecclesiastical constitution. The only nation for which it legislated, was the "holy nation, the peculiar people,"

consisting of believers in Christ, or his spiritual subjects, in all countries under heaven. Of this spiritual Israel, the ancient Israel was the predecessor, and the type. Herein consists the only true resemblance or analogy. For a civil ruler to prescribe a religion to his people, is not to imitate anything that existed under the Mosaic economy; for to no magistrate did that economy commit any such right, any such solemn responsibility: and the very appointment of a religion for a civil community, if the avowed design be to place that community in a position at all resembling the Jewish, involves the presumptuous attempt at an impossibility,—that, namely, of converting a civil community into a church,—and thus instituting a false analogy, and setting aside the true one; obliterating that between the typical and the true or spiritual Israel, and introducing what is unknown to the New-Testament oracles,—the anomaly of a *nation of Christians*, as if that were the legitimate and divinely intended counterpart to the nation of Israel. I am satisfied, that the only consistent principle of analogy between the National Establishment in Israel and the National Establishments pleaded for under the christian dispensation, on the ground of its being a model which warrants imitation, is that which identifies the nation and the church, and regards every member of the one as a member of the other,—every citizen as, in virtue of his citizenship, a Christian. They alone are consistent in holding the Jewish Establishment as the warrant and model of the Christian, who thus carry out their principle. Such, as was

noticed in our first Lecture, was the avowed principle of Hooker:—"We hold," says he, "that seeing there is not any man of the Church of England, but the same man is also a member of the Commonwealth, nor any member of the Commonwealth who is not also of the Church of England; therefore as in a figure triangle, the base doth differ from the sides thereof, and yet one and the self-same line is both a base and also a side—a side simply, a base if it chance to be the bottom and underlie the rest; so, albeit properties and actions of one do cause the name of a commonwealth, qualities and functions of another sort the name of a church, to be given to a multitude,—yet one and the self-same multitude may in such sort be both. Nay, it is so with us, that no one pertaining to the one can be denied also to be of the other."—"Our state is according to the pattern of God's own ancient elect people; which was not part of them the commonwealth, and part of them the church of God; but the self-same people, whole and entire, were both, under one chief Governor, on whose supreme authority they did all depend." This is consistent; and it is the only consistent imitation of the Jewish model. But alas! it is a consistency that is inconsistent with both the old economy and the new. The imitation is neither Judaism nor Christianity. It is not *Judaism;* for it wants its very essence, in wanting, what it could not possibly have, the theocracy, under which alone it was that the church and the commonwealth could be identical,—that the same people, collectively considered,

could be both;—and it is not *Christianity;* for from the beginning to the end of the New Testament there is not the remotest recognition of what, in expression, has become so familiar, that we have ceased to be sensible of the contradiction involved in it—a *christian nation;*—the only christian nation acknowledged there being the spiritual community of the faithful; a community, whose divine and only Head is Christ, as Jehovah was the divine and only head of ancient Israel,—and for which alone the legislative enactments of the New Testament were designed, as those of the Old were designed for its type and precursor. The religious ordinances of ancient Israel were instituted for the nation; and by all who belonged to the nation, as the descendants of the family of Abraham by Isaac, were enjoined to be observed. The ordinances of the New-Testament church were never designed to be national. No nation can be pointed out as, in this respect, the successor of the Jewish people. The very designations by which that people were distinguished from the rest of the world are, in the New-Testament oracles, applied, in their higher and more advanced and spiritual acceptation, to the whole body of "faithful men" in every people and kindred and nation and tongue, whom Paul denominates "the Israel of God." The transference of privilege and favour and blessing has been, not to any civil community under heaven, but to this "chosen generation," raised up by the truth and Spirit of God in all parts of the world, and united by a common faith, a common love, a common

character, and a common hope. The national celebration of the ordinance of the Lord's supper, in compliance with a summons of our gracious Queen to her faithful subjects, would now be an act of as licentious and hateful profanation, as the national celebration of the Passover by the Jews was an act of required and acceptable obedience. It belongs exclusively to the spiritual seed of the Father of the Faithful, the true successors of his natural offspring to the blessings of God's covenant,—the "general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven."

I am thus led to my *second* proposition—namely, that in the prophetic anticipations of New-Testament times, intimations were given of an entire change of system.

I have in part anticipated both this and my third observation;—on neither of which will it be necessary to dwell at any length. What were the reasons by which the infinitely wise God was induced to constitute his ancient church on the principle of nationality, it is not our present business to inquire. It is with the *fact* we have to do; and of the fact there cannot, I think, be any reasonable doubt. During the continuance of this national system, however, there could not fail to be, and, although at different periods to greater and less degrees of extent, there always was, a great prevalence of inconsistent and merely nominal religious profession and fellowship. At some times the amount of hypocrisy and corruption was fearful. This was the natural result of its nationality, connected with

the tendencies to evil and to delusive confidence in the mere externalities of religion, which belong to the fallen nature of man, and which, it may be admitted, are to a certain extent inseparable from every system, how select and spiritual soever in its principles and laws. But there was to be a change. The then existing state of things was not destined to continue. It was to "wax old, and to vanish away." In their anticipations of the "fulness of time," the inspired prophets frequently describe it as a time of purification to the church. "The wicked were to be shaken out of it." There were "no more to come into it the uncircumcised and the unclean." The covenant then to be made "with the house of Israel and the house of Judah" was not to be "according to the covenant which Jehovah had made with their fathers in the day when he brought them out of the land of Egypt." According to the new and more pure and spiritual covenant, he was to "write his laws upon their inward parts, and put them in their hearts:"—he was to "give them a new heart, and to put within them a new spirit; taking away the stony heart out of their flesh, and giving them a heart of flesh; and putting his Spirit within them, that they might walk in his statutes, and keep his commandments and do them." The Messiah, "the messenger of the covenant," was to come as a restorer and regenerator of his church; he was to "sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, purifying the sons of Levi, that they might offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness;" that is, in the terms of a popular

commentator formerly referred to, he was to "purify his church, and the hearts of his people, from all dross, and prepare a pure race of ministers and a spiritual priesthood (instead of the corrupt and rejected tribe of Levi) who might present before him a holy worship." The prophecy of Haggai, respecting the "shaking of the heavens and the earth," we have the best authority for interpreting of the final overthrow, at the coming of "the Desire of all nations," of the entire system of Jewish polity, ecclesiastical and civil, and the substitution of a new and more permanent system—a system which should never be moved:—"He hath promised—Yet once more, I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear."* This "kingdom which cannot be moved" is the New-Testament or Gospel Dispensation, so frequently denominated the "kingdom of God" and the "kingdom of heaven."

Where, then, are we to look for a commentary on such predictions of a change in the constitution and character of the church of God? Where but to the records of the actual constitution and character of the predicted kingdom? This should lead me immediately to my third

* Heb. xii. 26—28.

proposition — that there actually was a change accordingly. But as this change, strictly speaking, did not take place till after our Lord's ascension, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, —we may, with propriety, consider the intimations of Jesus himself, during his life, as possessing the character of prediction. The substance of his own testimony during his public ministry, and of what his messengers were then commissioned to proclaim, was, that "the kingdom of heaven was *at hand.*" And faithful and clear were the intimations which he gave of the spiritual character of that kingdom. In opposition to all the prevailing misconceptions of its nature,—so full of externality and worldliness,— he tells those who inquired "when the kingdom of God should come," that their expectations were delusive; that it should come with no such accompaniments of earthly pomp and power and glory as they anticipated; that it was "within them"—a kingdom which was to be set up, by a spiritual conquest, in the hearts of a renewed and holy people.* To such a people he must be understood to refer—there being no earthly nation, or civil community, of which what he said was true,—when he tells them, that, in requital of their rejection of himself and of his word and messengers, "the kingdom of God should be taken from them and given to A NATION bringing forth the fruits thereof."† —But I wish your attention more especially to that signal declaration of his to Pilate, to which reference is so frequently and so justly made, but of

* Luke xvii. 20, 21. † Matt. xxi. 45.

which, if I do not greatly mistake, the true and full import is seldom if ever understood:—I mean the declaration in John xviii. 36: "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." I do not refer at present to the general affirmation of the entirely spiritual nature of his kingdom, in contradistinction to the kingdoms of the earth, contained in the words—"My kingdom is not of this world;" although I am satisfied that that of itself is decisive: but I refer more especially to the closing words of the sentence just quoted—"but now is my kingdom not from hence." Some years ago I advanced a view of this passage in the North,—of the soundness of which subsequent reflection has confirmed rather than shaken the conviction. I am aware that by commentators and critics in general the Greek adverb *νῦν* is here understood as a particle of inference or deduction. Now, that this is one of the modes of its use in the practice of the language, as it is of the corresponding term—*now*—in our own, no one entertains a doubt. It strikes me, however, that it cannot be so understood in its present occurrence. The only ground on which it can be supposed inferential, or expressive of sequence, is, —that from the conditional proposition, "if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight," our Lord meant, and instructed Pilate to infer, that, seeing they did *not* fight, he might rest satisfied that his kingdom was *not* of this world.

—I submit, however, whether, had this been his intended meaning, the inferential phrase, instead of νῦν δὲ, would not have been νῦν οὖν. As the word *now* with us is capable of the same diversity of meaning, let us try how the case would stand in English. Had it been our Lord's purpose to suggest the inference that his kingdom was not of this world from the fact of his servants not fighting for his protection from his enemies, he would have said—"My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered unto the Jews: NOW, THEREFORE,"—or NOW, THEN, (*i.e.* seeing they do *not* fight)—"is my kingdom not from hence." The phrase "BUT NOW" places the inference in quite a different position: "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; BUT NOW is my kingdom not from hence"—and *therefore it is that they do not fight;* their not fighting is in harmony with its nature and principles. I cannot but regard the νῦν as bearing here its more ordinary signification, as an *adverb of time,* and our Lord as affirming that it was not *now,* in regard to his kingdom as it had been *of old,* or as it had been *hitherto.* Jesus had been charged with making himself a king, —and had been artfully represented as thus setting himself up as a rival to Cæsar. The charge was as malignant as it was artful. They converted into matter of capital crimination the very thing which, in reality, they were chagrined and incensed at his not having done. Had he "made himself a king,"

as they now wished Pilate to understand him to have done, instead of disowning and persecuting him to death, they would have been rallying around his standard to protect him, and to bear him on to conquest and dominion. Such, however, was the charge. And it may at once be admitted, that the answer of Jesus to Pilate's question—"Art thou a king?"—was designed to satisfy the Roman governor, that neither he nor his imperial master had aught to apprehend from him. But it should be recollected, that Jesus was not only accused, in general terms, of making himself *a king:* his appropriate designation was, "*the King of the Jews.*" Now, Pilate was aware, that, in former days, kings of the Jews had been kings of the same description as other kings,—maintaining their power, and the defence and extension of their dominions, by the same means; not a few of them warlike, and distinguished by their military prowess and the might of their arms. Whatever he might think of the unintimidating and defenceless circumstances of him who now stood before him,—without the favour of priests, nobles, or people,—yet, having heard the charge under which he had been arraigned at his bar, he was desirous to ascertain the real nature and amount of his pretensions. If he called himself "King of the Jews," was he to be a king bearing any resemblance to former kings of that people? Was he to be such as they had been? Here, I apprehend, in connexion with the general affirmation of the spirituality of his kingdom, lies no small measure of the force and conclusiveness

of the argument from this passage. It is found in the word NOW; — "*now* is my kingdom not from hence." Whether Pilate fully comprehended the meaning of the word or not, is not our present question. He knew nothing of the *theocracy*. He knew nothing of the *divinity* of him who stood at his tribunal,—and who, ere he appeared on earth, had been the Divine Head of the chosen people. But the question relates to what Christ's words actually express. They involve a comparison between the past and the present; and they intimate a change,—a change from what *had been* to what was *now to be*. He had all along, in a way which we understand, though Pilate we have no reason to suppose did, been King of the Jews. But in former times, his kingdom, in its form and constitution, had been national;—there was in it an incorporation of the civil and the sacred; and it was administered and defended by similar outward means as other kingdoms. But now it was to be otherwise. The "NOW" announces a transition,—a transition from a comparatively secular and worldly state of his kingdom to a state essentially different. In this view, therefore,—and I do most sincerely believe it to be the true one (for, with what other sins soever I may have to charge myself I cannot plead guilty to having ever, in the course of my ministry, for the sake of supporting any article of faith or practice, affixed a meaning to any one text or portion of the word of God, different from what, in my conscience, I have believed to be its true and proper import—the "mind of the Spirit");—in this

view of the words, I say, we have in it an explicit disavowal, from the Redeemer's own lips, of the Old-Testament constitution of his kingdom, as in any respect a model for the kingdom he was about to establish.* And in the terms which immediately follow, while he gives an answer in the affirmative to the question of Pilate—"Thou art a King then?"—he announces the true nature of the new constitution of his kingdom, by describing, in one comprehensive feature, the character of its subjects—"Thou sayest that I am—a King:—to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth: *every one who is of the truth heareth my voice.*" Henceforward, the subjects of his kingdom were to be those, of whatever nation under heaven, who believed the truth, and lived under its practical influence; and it was to maintain its ground, punish its delinquents, and extend its conquests, by no power but the moral power of the same truth,—by no sword but "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." If we are to take the criterion of a worldly kingdom, as here given by our Lord himself,—"If my kingdom *were* of this world, then would my servants *fight*,"—the question will at once be settled, whether the alliance of this kingdom with the state was consistent with its spiritual and heavenly character;—for no sooner did the church of Christ become a state-incorporated church, than those words were deprived of their distinctive meaning. His servants *did* fight. The sword was assumed, for the purposes of defence, of extension,

* See Note at the end of this Lecture.

of the settlement of controversies, of compulsory subjugation, and of vindictive discipline.

I have now to offer a very few observations on my *third* proposition — That *there was a change accordingly.* We have already seen this, in considering both the negation of every thing in the New Testament in support of Establishments, and the positive evidence of the constitution of the church having been framed on entirely different principles. There was a perfect harmony between the previous intimations and the facts. The facts constitute a most striking and satisfactory commentary on the intimations, and present the most decisive confirmation of the principles. I must not spend your time in going over the same ground again. We have demonstrated the matter of fact, in regard to the New Testament, in the two ways just alluded to. We have shown you first, negatively, that, in that statute-book of Christ's kingdom there is no recognition of nationality in the church's constitution, and no recognition of the power of civil rulers in matters of religion; and we have shown you, in the second place, positively, that there is the plainest and most explicit matter-of-fact evidence, both historical and preceptive, that the New-Testament church was constituted upon the principle of independence,—as a community *per se,* —all its interests, relative to the maintenance of its ordinances and its ministry, its internal prosperity, and its progressive advancement, being entrusted exclusively to itself, in reliance on the promised presence and blessing of its exalted Head. I might here,

with propriety, enlarge on the spiritual character of this kingdom of heaven, as a kingdom which, agreeably to this frequent designation of it, is "not of this world." It is altogether peculiar and distinct: peculiar in the manner of its introduction; in the principles and qualifications of its rulers; in the character of its subjects; in the bonds of union by which they are associated; in the spirituality of its design; in the simplicity of its constitution; in its entire separation from the secularities of earthly administration; in its fitness for universality, for subsisting and prospering, if only allowed the privilege of being let alone, under every form of civil government, and in every stage and condition of human society; in the means of its support and progress; in the entire structure of its internal discipline and modes of dealing with offenders; in all that constitutes its present felicity and glory; and in its future and eternal distinctions, those equitable punishments and gracious rewards, which lie alike beyond the limits of the present sublunary scene. But the illustration of topics such as these, how interesting soever in themselves, and how closely soever connected with our subject, I must waive, for want of time.

What, then, is the position and amount of our argument? A more complete one,—and one more consistent in all its parts,—it is not easy to conceive. We have first, the incompatibility of the ancient model with every idea of imitation,—in its possessing, by its theocratic character, what no man can imitate but God, and what, at the same time,

was no mere circumstantial adjunct, but constituted its very essence, and the very principle of its reasonableness,—and in its wanting what is essential in every pretended imitation of it, all human legislation in regard to religion;—then we have, secondly, when the ancient seers anticipate the fulness of time and the introduction of the new covenant, distinct prophetic intimations of a change, —of the passing away of the old system,—the constitution of the Jewish church,—and the introduction of another, a simpler, a freer, a more spiritual and a more lasting constitution, suited to the new and improved state of things; and we have these intimations of the prophets confirmed from the lips of the Redeemer himself, while he was executing the work given him to do, on which, when completed, his kingdom was to arise and to rest;—and then we have, in the third place, the actual record of the change,—the simple history of the founding of the kingdom,—and the practical exhibition of its constitution and laws;—along with express preceptive injunctions, confirmatory of all that is taught us by the history. And I might have added to all this, that we have not the remotest hint, prospectively given, of any coming time when the constitution was to undergo any authorized change. I ask, then, with confidence—What more is it possible for us to have? If the question is not even thus to be settled, let it be shown *what is required to settle it.*

What, then, is there that stands in reply to all this, to rebut its conclusiveness, or even to mitigate its force? Let us see:—

1. In regard to the ancient Jewish constitution, considered as a national religious Establishment, we are required to produce *an express statute of repeal.* Such a statute, it is alleged, is necessary to the authoritative setting *aside* of any ancient institute. We have two answers to this demand. In the first place—if the Jewish constitution was what we have represented it — a theocracy, and consequently what could not possibly be repeated but by express divine intervention, what need was there for a statute of repeal? Was divine withdrawment not enough? To what end pass a positive statute, prohibiting that to be done again, the doing of which again was beyond the will and the power of any creature,—actually and necessarily *ultra vires* to any but God himself? God does nothing in vain; and such a statute would, assuredly, have been in vain. Secondly,—It does appear to me, and I am confident it will so appear to you, that there is what, in such a case, is quite equivalent, and even more than equivalent, to a statute of repeal, setting aside an old constitution—I mean, a *statute of enactment introducing a new one.* If we have a new constitution actually introduced,—historically and preceptively introduced,—is that not enough? I have called it more than equivalent to a statute of repeal. The reason is plain. A simple statute of repeal does no more than set aside what has existed. It might thus determine nothing positive. It might leave us at liberty as to the course we should now pursue, with the single exception of our not adhering to the past—to the system authoritatively

exploded. But the actual introduction of a new system goes farther. It involves the abrogation of what *had been*, and settles at the same time what *is now to be*. It leaves no license to exercise our own wisdom, and follow our own counsels.

I might add, as a *third* answer—We are not without what amounts, even in more direct terms, to such a statute of repeal. We have our Lord's own declaration respecting the spiritual nature of his kingdom, and the fundamental change in its character and constitution under the economy he had come to introduce. And we have the whole of the Epistle to the Hebrews, divinely intimating the entire abrogation of the ancient Jewish system, as having been destined to be shaken, to wax old, and to vanish away. The whole constitution of the theocracy, or Sinaitic covenant, was set aside by express intimation from Him by whom it had been instituted, and by whom alone indeed it could be maintained. The abrogation included the nationality of the church; no nation succeeding the Jewish, when it was cast off, but the spiritual Israel of God, belonging to all the tribes of human kind. And to this spiritual people alone, be it remembered, is the new constitution at all adapted. To nationalize it, is to destroy this adaptation—to mar the consistency and harmony of the plan,—and thus, as a necessary sequence, to frustrate the efficiency of its working. The church that consists of "the HOLY NATION," the "peculiar people," is the ONLY NATIONAL CHURCH under the new dispensation, — the only genuine and acknowledged successor to that of the ancient

Israel. The royal and the sacerdotal offices in Israel terminated alike in Christ, whose twofold office, as "a priest upon his throne," was the antitype of both. When, as the "great high priest of our profession," he had "offered up himself," and, in reward of his finished work, was "raised up," agreeably to divine prediction, "to sit upon the throne of his father David," his last successor to that throne, and destined to be its perpetual occupant, his kingdom having no end:—then priesthood and royalty, in so far as the human administration of that kingdom was concerned, expired together;—the ceremonial and the judicial laws were together abolished;—the civil and the sacred were for ever separated;—all secular authority and power were cast out of the church;—the typical throne of David was vacated, and the throne typified by it, occupied, solely and without succession, by Him whom Jehovah has "set as King upon his holy hill of Zion;"—every sceptre was broken and thrown aside but his own;—the state and the church were severed,—the latter now constituting the kingdom of which the Son and Lord of David is the exalted head, and in which there is no royalty, any more than there is any priesthood, but his; except that all his subjects constitute a "royal priesthood," being, in virtue of their union with him, invested with the spiritual dignity of "kings and priests unto God, even his Father."

2. Another way in which our opponents meet the argument derived from the actual constitution of the New-Testament church, as it appears in the

New Testament itself, is, by an alleged *impossibility*. —The circumstances of the case did not at the time, we are reminded, admit of such a thing as the union of church and state, or the placing of Christianity under the protecting and fostering care of any civil government. The Lord's time for that was not then come.

Now, of all the modes of reasoning resorted to, this is one of the most extraordinary. It involves principles such as no Christian, if he duly considers them, can adopt, and retain his faith either in the supremacy of the divine government, or in the exclusive authority of the divine word.—They who use the argument, must either, on the one hand, deny the absoluteness of the divine control, or, on the other, affirm the providence of God to be the interpreter of his moral will; that is, *fact* to be proof of *right*.—We, indeed, have also spoken of impossibilities. We have represented the imitation of the Jewish theocracy as an impossibility. But mark well the difference between our impossibility and theirs. Ours is the impossibility of *men's* doing what, from the nature of the thing, cannot be done without the concurrence of *God*;—theirs is the impossibility of *God's* doing what could not be done without the concurrence of *men*.—Circumstances did not admit of it! as if there were any circumstances which were not under the absolute dominion of omnipotence! There may be nothing more than inconsideration on the part of those who give utterance to the sentiment;—but in the sentiment itself there is no ordinary presumption. It

enfolds the very embryo of atheism. Circumstances did not then admit of it!—Under whose providential administration did these circumstances exist? Were they unforeseen and unprovided for, on the part of Him whose entire course of procedure, from the beginning, was regulated in preparatory subserviency to the great events of the fulness of time, and to the interests of the kingdom which was then to be founded? Did they come in the way of the Supreme Disposer as contingencies, to which he found it necessary, for the time, to accommodate his plans, and which rendered the full execution of those plans inconvenient? The Most High God was introducing a new economy, or constitution, of his church in the world. Is it not reasonable to suppose that at the time to which all type, and promise, and prophecy, had looked forward, he would place it on the footing on which he intended it to continue? Were we to represent it as impossible for the Apostles and primitive disciples to effect an alliance of their religion with the civil powers, we should say no more than the truth. *They* could not command this, either with Jewish or with Gentile rulers. But in the introduction and establishment of the New-Testament dispensation, all the preparatory and all the immediate agency was divine. It was "the Lord's doing." "Men were his hand." To Him who said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth,"—to Him who "hath on his vesture and on his thigh the name written, King of kings and Lord of lords,"—to Him "who has the hearts of all men in

his hand, and who turneth them as the rivers of water, whithersoever he will,"—to HIM "all things were possible."

But I can fancy an opponent getting fretful and indignant at such an imputation, and ready to say —Who denies its *possibility?* All that we mean is, that *then was not God's time;* and that that time we have no right to prescribe; that He did not *see fit* to do at the first what he did see fit to do afterwards; and that since, in respect to time, as well as to every thing else, the infinitely Wise can never err, the only impossibility we affirm is of a moral nature,—the impossibility of his doing at one time what he saw would be better done at another. Very well; let us look at the case in *this* light. We shall find it is only passing from Scylla to Charybdis. That three centuries after the constitution of the kingdom of Christ was settled by the inspired Apostles, a change affecting its essential elements was made in it by the Roman emperor Constantine, is a fact in history. That God, in his providence, permitted this fact to take place, is not to be denied. The simple question, then, is,—Whether such permission be an evidence of approbation?—or, as I have already expressed it,—Whether *fact* be a proof of *right?* Will any one of our brethren venture to say so? Will they adopt in a form so unqualified, the maxim, "Whatever is, is right?" I need not say to what transcendent absurdities such a principle would lead, — stamping with the impress of a divine sanction, with "the image and superscription

of heaven,"—the whole antichristian "Mystery of Iniquity," and every description of evil that is done under the sun! If this will not be contended for by any man who wishes to have credit for sanity,—then where is the argument? You refer us to the *fact*. But it is not the fact we want; it is evidence of the divine approbation of it. We too point you to a fact,—the fact of the constitution of the church, as recorded in the inspired oracles. The divine authority of that fact you do not deny. We ask, then, for *your* evidence, that the fact to which *you* point had in it the same authority. *Satisfy us on this one point, and we yield all.* Is the demand unreasonable? Is it unreasonable, that, when an innovation on the fundamental principles of the Apostolic constitution is introduced hundreds of years after their time, we should hesitate about acquiescing in that innovation?—unreasonable, that we should demur at being required to withdraw our faith from the Apostles and transfer it to Constantine?—unreasonable, that to the imperial head of Rome, when he presumed to legislate for the divine head of the church, we should put the question—"By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee that authority?"—unreasonable, that, instead of venturing to introduce, on our own responsibility, or adopt on the responsibility of others, important alterations in what we know to have had the sanction of Deity, we should prefer acting on the divine interdiction,—an interdiction which cannot surely be less strongly applicable to the Apostolic than to the Mosaic word—

"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you; neither shall ye diminish aught from it?"—unreasonable, when, on the ground of this solemn interdiction, we make the New-Testament Scriptures the standard to which we bring, and by which we test, every sentiment and every practice in religion subsequently introduced, and carry back Constantine in the fourth century to the tribunal of Paul in the first, placing the emperor at the bar of the Apostle? We take, then, this position,—a position from which we cannot be moved; and we beseech our brethren of the Establishment to think of it anew, and to consider, whether, in attempting to dislodge us from it, they may not be found "fighting against God." They cannot question the plain facts of the New-Testament record. These facts were ordered by the authority of the King of Zion. If they presume to say—he *might intend it to be otherwise afterwards,* I remind them, that the mere fact can never be admitted as any evidence of such intention, and demand of them a new revelation, accredited by the same proofs of divinity which attested that of the old.

3. But we are told, in the third place, that the favourable interposition of civil governments in behalf of the church, is a fulfilment of prophecy, and that this may be regarded as a sufficient sanction for such interposition.

The predictions principally insisted on are these: Isa. xlix. 23. "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers:—they shall bow down to thee with their face toward

the earth, and shall lick up the dust of thy feet, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me."—Psa. ii. 2, 3, 10—12. "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us:—Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth; serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little."—Psa. lxxii. 10, 11. "The kings of Tarshish and of the Isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him."

On such predictions as these, I offer the following observations:—(1). In the *first* place:—Since "no prophecy of the scripture is of self-interpretation," predictions that are obviously of general undefined import, and consequently susceptible of modifications of meaning, must be interpreted in harmony with subsequent facts. If the nature and constitution of the New-Testament kingdom are clearly ascertained from the explicit principles and historical statements of the New-Testament record, then ought the predictions in question to be interpreted in a sense that is not at variance with these principles and statements. No canon of exposition can be more self-evidently reasonable than this. It would be a procedure the most preposterous, to derive our views of the church of Christ from general and

comparatively obscure intimations of prophecy. We must reverse the process; we must take our key for the interpretation of such prophecies from the accounts of that church contained in the New-Testament Scriptures. The observation may be illustrated by an analogous case. There are predictions respecting the *worship* of New-Testament times, that are expressed in terms borrowed from the ceremonial worship of the old covenant; but, from the cessation of that covenant and its worship, we *know* that such predictions are to be explained on principles consistent with the more spiritual and simple service of the new economy. So it is with the other class of prophecies of which we now speak.

(2.) Supposing we should grant that the rulers of the kingdoms of this world are spoken to, and spoken of, in their *official* character,—not admitting this, but supposing it,—it will not be denied, surely, that there is a previous and primary reference to them *personally*. Thus, in the second Psalm, they are in the first instance, called to faith in Christ, and personal subjection to him. It was not *as kings* merely,—it was *as sinners*, they were in danger of perishing; and it was as sinners, not as kings, that they were commanded to "kiss the Son," that they might escape his kindled "wrath." Supposing it, then, to be *as kings*, in their *official* capacity, that they are enjoined to "serve the Lord,"—then it is as *converted, penitent, believing kings*. It is assumed that they must be personally in a state of spiritual subjection to Christ, before they can in any way acceptably serve him. The same thing is evident

in regard to the passage from Isaiah. The kings spoken of are converted princes, who, with their queens, instead of spurning, in their scornful loftiness, the restraints of piety, become, from humble and devout attachment to the church and to its exalted head, the conscientious, tender, and zealous protectors and promoters of its interests;—in the terms of a commentator whom I have already more than once quoted—"rendering the most profound respect for the church, and for its faithful, consistent, pastors and rulers; not attempting to have dominion over her faith, but promoting, by all proper means, her comfort and prosperity; and showing her honour, for the Lord's sake, proportioned to the contempt and indignity with which she has been treated." Are we really, then, to regard predictions which tell us of the conversion of kings, and of their willing subjection and prostrate homage to the King of Zion,—and the consequent spontaneous employment of all their legitimate influence for the advancement of his cause,—are we, I say, to regard such predictions as receiving their accomplishment by the agency of those princes, elective or hereditary, who have borne, as a part of their royal or imperial prerogative, the headship of their respective ecclesiastical establishments,—who, in the exercise of this prerogative, have sought the gratification of their own ambition incomparably more than the advancement of the kingdom of Jesus Christ,—who have no other conception of that kingdom than as the ecclesiastical branch of their own dominion,—who, how ungodly and how profligate soever may

be their character, are held "*religious*" by courtesy, and *christian* by a fiction of law,—"defenders of the faith" which they neither believe nor know, and heads of the church on earth, while they are "aliens" from the church both on earth and in heaven?

(3.) When we speak of acting in their *official capacity*, we mean that they act *with authority;* and when we speak of their acting with authority, we mean that their enactments are accompanied with statutes of compulsion, to ensure obedience, and with statutes of penalty, to correct transgression,—that they "bear not the sword in vain." Now, we do most distinctly deny, that any king or queen on earth is entitled, on any ground of right of which there is the shadow of recognition in the christian statute-book, to introduce any such authority, any such compulsion, any such penalty, for enforcing obedience to any of the laws of Christ's kingdom, or for avenging the infraction of them on the part of any subject of that kingdom. That kingdom stands before us in the New Testament as an independent kingdom,—having a king of its own, subjects of its own, laws of its own, obligations of its own, penalties of its own. These penalties are all of a piece with the spiritual character of the kingdom; the highest of them consisting in a sentence of exclusion from the communion and privileges of the faithful,—a sentence altogether independent of any secular power on earth, and with which the highest and mightiest possessor of such power never had, and has not now, the remotest title to interfere. It is a kingdom, of which the monarch of millions

cannot even be a subject, but as an humble believer in Jesus Christ, and a holy partaker of his Spirit:—whose discipline should refuse even to that monarch a participation of its privileges, except as sustaining this character, and should exclude him from those privileges, if on such a profession he enjoyed them, even as it would the meanest, for all impenitent inconsistency:—and for the sake of whose obligations and blessings, that monarch, if he cannot hold his secular honours consistently with a conscientious subjection to its principles and laws, must resign his sceptre, and take his place among "the disciples" as a self-denying vassal of the cross, holding it as a higher dignity than earthly ambition can ever reach, to be able to call himself "less than the least of all saints."

(4.) Surely they who would found the magistrate's power in religion on such passages as these, must be sensible of one most important defect in them, when regarded as the grounds of any official duty—I mean their extraordinary *indefiniteness.* They are so exceedingly general and vague, that, in settling the functions of those to whom they relate, it is actually *impossible to make any use of them.* Were there other parts of Scripture, where these functions were more explicitly pointed out, their nature explained, and their boundaries with any precision defined, the case would be different. We should then, in the one, have a key to the other. But when we merely read of kings and judges serving Jehovah,—and of kings with their queens being nursing fathers and nursing mothers to the church,

—and this latter too, in a connexion which, so far from involving a claim of authority or dominion, represents them as "bowing down before her with their faces towards the earth, and licking up the dust of her feet,"—we are left in utter perplexity as to the place which civil rulers are to hold in relation to the church; what they are to be,—what they are to do,—and in what manner they are to do it. And in the New Testament the expressions in which the kings of the earth are brought at all into contact with the church, are of the same undefined description,—even more so, if possible, than the other. In attempting to form definite conceptions on a subject like this,—in ascertaining either the positive obligations or the negative restrictions of official duty,—what is there to be made of that precious and fail-me-never phrase—"the earth helping the woman?"—or of "the kings of the earth bringing their glory and honour" into the heavenly city? What is there in such terms that is at all tangible?—at all reducible to any thing like definite and intelligible principles of action? Yet to these texts, and such as these, are we gravely referred, for the foundation of the system of civil establishments, and for the sanction of the magistrate's power in religion. It says little for the validity of a system, when, instead of presenting us with plain facts, and precepts, and divinely accredited principles, its supporters direct us for its foundation to little scraps of the phraseology of obscure prophetic symbol.

(5.) Really converted and godly rulers may be

incomparably more efficient in promoting, throughout their dominions, the prevalence of true religion and its great practical ends, by the influence of their personal example, and by the many legitimate means to which their exalted station gives them access, than by the exercise of official prerogative, and the coercion of legislative enactment. The incongruity between the known character of the sovereign, or, more generally, of the government, and the nature of those enactments, has many a time been the occasion of shocking and revolting the feelings of the good, and of provoking the ridicule of the profane. Example is, by proverbial authority, more powerful than precept. Laws in support of religion, from a court or a parliament notorious for its opposite, can never operate, with beneficial effect, on the moral sentiments, and religious principles and feelings, of a community. What they exact in the form of pecuniary support or external conformity, they more than nullify by their influence on the popular character. With what sentiments, but those of disgust and scorn, can a community ever regard the religious proclamations and statutes of an irreligious ruler?—the laws against blasphemy issued by a blasphemer?—a Sabbath-breaker's prohibitions of Sabbath profanation?—the edicts of an unbeliever, in support and vindication of the faith? It were even well, if such anomalies were only harmless,—if they only went for nothing. They are worse than harmless,—worse than good for nothing. They are directly and seriously mischievous. They lower, in the

public estimate, the claims and obligations of religion. They make infidels; they make hypocrites. —A royal subject of divine grace,—a civil ruler under the power of true religion,—might prove a genuine and efficient "nursing father" to the church,—without the enaction of a single compulsory statute, or the interposition coercively, in any one instance, of his magisterial authority.—I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of introducing here, in illustration of these principles, a passage from Mr. Williams's most fascinating "Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South-Sea Islands." He is replying to the charge of Dr. Lee, by whom the progress of Christianity there had been ascribed to the aid it derived from the civil power:—

"Having witnessed the introduction of Christianity into a greater number of islands than any other missionary, I can safely affirm, that in no single instance has the civil power been employed in its propagation. It is true, that the *moral* influence of the chiefs has, in many instances, been most beneficially exerted in favour of Christianity; but never, to my knowledge, have they employed coercion, to induce their subjects to embrace it. And I feel satisfied, that in few cases, has the beautiful prediction been more strikingly accomplished,—'And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers.' Had the missionaries desired the exercise of that power, the chiefs were not in a condition to gratify them; for they had to defend themselves against the fury of a large portion of their own subjects by whom they were so

fiercely attacked.—I am moreover happy in being able to contradict the assertion of Dr. Lee: because, were it true, it would have detracted from the honour of Christ, by the interposition of whose providence the great work has been effected:—'His own arm hath gotten him the victory.' Farther, it would have derogated from the honour of Christianity, which has triumphed, not by human authority, but by its own moral power, by the light which it spread abroad, by the benevolent spirit it disseminated;—for 'kindness is the key to the human heart,' whether it be of savage or of civilized man; and when, instead of being barbarously murdered, they were treated with kindness, the multitude immediately embraced the truth; for they naturally attributed this mighty transformation in their formerly sanguinary chieftains, to the benign influences of the gospel upon their minds."* —It will not be questioned, surely, that, when the Scripture prophecies speak of the kings of the earth acceding to the dominion of the Son of God, and bowing submissively to his sceptre, the predictions should be understood in consistency with the nature of his reign. They must mean true spiritual subjection; for to a spiritual reign there can be no other. But a royal convert, if scripturally enlightened respecting the reign to which he submits, will at once be sensible, that in the kingdom of which he thus becomes a subject, he cannot be a legislator. He will shrink from every thing of the kind, as an audacious inter-

* Pages 190, 191.

ference with a foreign and superior jurisdiction; as an act of more unseemly presumption, than if one of his own subjects were to take upon him the framing of laws for the realm of which he is himself the legitimate sovereign.

(6.) If the establishment of Christianity, after the persecutions of the first three centuries, was indeed a part of the gracious fulfilment of prophetic promises,—then must it, in point of fact, have proved an essential benefit to the church; that is, not to her secular interests merely, her temporal peace and prosperity, but to her only true improvement, as a spiritual kingdom, her advancement in purity, in union, in holy elevation, in heavenly-minded, active, self-denying godliness. But, while I mention this, I cannot enter into the consideration of the inquiry to which it immediately leads,—respecting the salutary or the prejudicial effects of Establishments,—without unwarrantable anticipation of the subject of a future lecture: and, at any rate, it would be too large a field on which to enter now.

These general comments may suffice to show, that such passages are at best but a precarious and sandy foundation on which to rear and to rest the system of Establishments. When the passage in Isaiah is taken in its connexion,—which relates to the casting-off of the Jews and the bringing in of the Gentiles; by the promise of which latter event, the church is prophetically consoled for the loss of her children by the former,—I have seen nothing to induce me to change my opinion of its meaning given years ago:—The church says,—"Who hath

begotten me these, seeing I had lost my children? And who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone;—these, where had they been?" The divine answer is—"Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and will set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders:—and kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers:—they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and shall lick up the dust of thy feet,—and thou shalt know that I am the Lord." "What mean these words, if not these two things: *first*, that the church, when in despondency at the casting off, by the rejection of the unbelieving Jewish nation, of the great mass of her nominal but unworthy children, should be replenished with many converts from the Gentile world? and, *secondly*, that in due time she should number among her humblest and most devoted subjects and servants, the most exalted in station and mightiest in influence of the sons of men,—so attached to her interests, and so conscious of her greatness, and of the honour and the blessedness of connexion with her, as to 'bow down their faces to the earth, and lick up the dust of her feet;' —and that these eminent personages should take a part and an interest, heartfelt and pious, in the increase and the training of her spiritual children? Has this been the general character of the kings and queens who have been the heads of the various and contradictory Establishments of Christianity that have had place in countries denominated christian?"

Have the high-sounding titles of ecclesiastical supremacy, which such princes have assumed, been quite in harmony with "bowing down their faces to the earth, and licking up the dust of her feet?"—I submit to the judgment of my hearers, whether, if protestant churchmen find a fulfilment of the *former* portion of the prophecy in the part which monarchs have acted in giving the church her secular establishments,—*Romanists* may not, with at least equal plausibility, be entitled to plead, in their own behalf, the fulfilment of the *latter*, in the abject and humiliating submission of such princes as Frederic Barbarossa and his successor, and the emperor Henry the Fourth, and Henry the Second and John of England, and others, who held the stirrup of His Holiness the Pope,—and kissed the foot that trode upon their necks,—and did penance of days and nights in cold and nakedness at the haughty pontiff's gate,—and made bare-headed and bare-footed pilgrimages, at his bidding, to the shrine of canonized infamy,—and resigned their crowns to his disposal, to receive them back as his gift. Could ever events, they might ask, more exactly correspond with the terms of the prediction—"They shall bow down to thee with their faces to the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet?" and, with triumph, on such a principle, might they point to the general prostrate vassalage of the crowned heads of Europe.

And with regard to the second Psalm, already quoted,—neither have I seen reason to retract my former view of it:—"The spirit of the passage appears to be this. The kings and rulers of the

earth, who set themselves against the Lord and his anointed, are described as, with haughty contempt and indignant stubbornness, refusing subjection to their authority. Jehovah laughs to scorn their impious defiance, and, in despite of it, 'sets his King on his holy hill of Zion.' What, then, is the amount of the warning with which the psalm concludes?—That high as they were, there was a higher than they,—Jehovah's Royal Son;—that, if they persisted, with unholy infatuation, in their rebellion against him, they must feel his superiority, and perish before his kindled wrath;—and that, if they would escape this miserable end, and be safe and blessed, they must lay aside their kingly pride, and, stooping from the loftiness of royalty, become themselves the willing and lowly subjects of Him whose power they had defied, and whose elevation to his throne they had vainly combined to hinder. Jehovah, who, in the beginning of the psalm, laughs at the puny efforts of their vain and weak audacity, does not, in the close of it, bespeak the aid of their official functions, but warns them of their own danger, and, for their own sake, admonishes them to timely submission." It was not by making Christianity the religion of their dominions, and becoming the heads and patrons of Established Churches, that they were to effect their escape and security, but by a personal faith in Christ, and a personal submission to his reign.

I have thus finished what I had to advance on this great question, from the word of God. Not that I have exhausted the subject. To have taken

up every passage, and every view of each, would have required an expansion incompatible with my present limits. I trust, however, I have succeeded in proving—negatively, that there is no ground in the Bible, as it relates, prophetically, historically, or preceptively, to the New-Testament economy, for the connexion of Christianity with civil governments,—for any such union of church and state as all Establishments have involved;—and positively, that in the New Testament, there is direct and explicit evidence of the constitution of the kingdom having been changed from that of Moses,—of the union of the civil and the sacred having been abrogated with the theocracy,—and of the support and promotion of the church's interests having been exclusively committed in charge to the church itself. With a general observation or two, I shall close this already too protracted lecture.

I formerly urged upon you the position, that on this, as on every question that relates to our obligations as Christians, the first inquiry ought to be, What saith the Scripture? Notwithstanding the many examples that have been set of it,—eminent examples too, and among the rest, that of a writer of merited celebrity, who has obtained the distinctive designation of "the *judicious* Hooker,"—I have never been able to see the propriety of entering into extended abstract discussion respecting the dictates of nature, and the lessons of reason,—the origin and foundation, the general principles and the various kinds, of law,—ere we can be in possession of sufficient data with which to come to the exami-

nation of the New Testament,—or to enable us to form an enlightened judgment as to the precepts and examples it contains, which form the model for the permanent constitution of the church of Christ. By how few of those for whose direction the sacred oracles were intended could they, in that case, be understood or obeyed! However learned, however admirable, such discussions may in themselves be, and how capable soever of useful application otherwise;—we cannot, on such a subject as the present, admit either their necessity or their utility. They may be very well, where we have to invent and fabricate a constitution for ourselves; but where our sole duty is to read, understand, and obey, they only serve to divert the mind from this simple course,—drawing it away from a direct appeal to the standard,—or pre-occupying it with notions of right, and maxims of expediency, such as may rather mislead than guide it, in bringing that standard to practice. The very instituting of such previous investigations assumes and proceeds upon the principle, that we have something, and even a great deal, more to do with the New Testament, than simply to follow it;—that we have to take its principles and precepts and examples, and compare them with the existing condition of society in different countries, and by the exercise of our own sagacity, to adjust the one to the other, and so to frame one system for one country, and another for another, according to circumstances. But all this proceeds on the assumption of Christianity being designed to be a national religion. Two things are forgotten: the first, that the church

being a spiritual community, composed of men, not as citizens, but as saints,—the materials of this community being in every place and in every age the same, the same constitution that suited it at first, must suit it always;—the second, that the gospel was actually preached, and converts actually made, in countries where the most diversified schemes of civil polity prevailed,—and yet in the constitution and laws of the church, as it subsisted in these various places, there was no difference,—they were everywhere the same.

If, then, on the particular subject before us, we have ascertained what was the principle on which the church was originally founded, *we have no choice left us—we have nothing to do but to obey.* Nonconformity here is disobedience, not to men, but to God. We truly honour HIM, when we act on the principle, that whatever we find in his word is right,—and alone right;—that no principle of his, followed out with a fearless faith, will ever work injuriously;—that every command of his, whether it relate to personal or to social conduct, will do good to them who studiously and devoutly keep it. On this account, it ought to be the grand aim of every christian minister to bring the community of God's people to this conviction;—to bring them all to a simple-hearted and unconditional surrender of judgment, and conscience, and conduct, to the dictation of the word of God,—to adjust every thing to this standard. The church will never be right till this is done. If any, considering the connexion of Christianity with the state as a step

of the church's advancement and an accession to her means of aggrandizement, shall object that this would be *going back;* my answer is,—faithfulness to truth requires that answer, how offensive soever it may be,—It would be going back in the same sense in which the Israelites of old went back, when, from "walking in counsels of their own," they returned to follow those of Jehovah, given them by Moses and the prophets. Their departure from these was properly their *going back;* and their retracing the steps of their backslidings and wanderings was the first thing necessary to their future prosperity and progress. All advancement, till this was done, was advancement in evil,—was a step farther astray. If we entertain the imagination, that the church has been making progress by her departure from the primitive principles of her constitution, we "do greatly err:" yes; and the Saviour's words may, with all truth, be added—"not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." Departure from the mind of Christ can never be progress. The only dissent to be deprecated,—the only dissent from which hazard can ever arise,—is dissent from the Apostles. Our only safety is in return. Wild as to many the counsel may be, it is, we are well assured, the only wise, the only consistent one. We cannot abandon it; we cannot swerve from it; we cannot, while we have breath to utter it, abstain from urging its necessity. Let Christians only give God's *word* its proper place; and they will not be long of giving its proper place to his *church.* Let them only, with simplicity of heart

and practical consistency, resolve, that they will have no rule but the will of Christ, and that they will follow that rule implicitly and fearlessly;—and the very first thing they will do, will be, "with one heart and one soul," in the spirit of indignant penitential shame, to sever the bond by which rash and presumptuous hands have leagued his kingdom with the kingdoms of this world,—to reinstate it in the dignity of its pristine independence, and hallow it anew to God in its original heavenliness and purity!

## NOTE, (page 119.)

HAVING, since this Lecture was delivered, had a passage pointed out to me by a friend, in the volumes recently published of the Life and Writings of the late Mr. John Walker, of Dublin, a work which I had only seen announced by advertisement, I gladly avail myself of the confirmation given of this view of the passage by the authority of one whose intellectual vigour and perspicacity, and whose first-rate classical scholarship, no person will question, whatever may be thought of some peculiarities in his religious sentiments, or of the spirit in which, at times, they were maintained.

" 'My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but *now* (*νῦν δὲ*) is my kingdom not from hence.' John xviii. 36. Do not the latter words, '*but now*,' obviously contrast the character of Christ's kingdom, under the new dispensation, with its character under the old? The things of the latter had been *earthly*; its sanctuary a *worldly* sanctuary; its ordinances *carnal*; the sanctions and enforcements of its laws of a worldly and temporal nature; the *church* and the *state* really incorporated (see Heb. ix. 1, 23; John iii. 12.) Even then, indeed, all were *patterns* of the things in the heavenly kingdom; and the true Israel looked beyond the shadows to the substance, looked to the end (or accomplishment) of that dispensation which was to be abolished; and 'confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims upon earth, desiring a better country, that is, an heavenly.' Heb. xi. 13—16. *But now* the shadows have passed away; the earthly kingdom is at an end, and succeeded by an heavenly kingdom, 'which cannot be moved.' Now, therefore, every attempt to incorporate Christ's kingdom with the kingdoms of *this world*, is an attempt to change its essential nature, a virtual denial 'that Christ has come in the flesh.'"—*Essays and Correspondence, chiefly on Scriptural Subjects. By the late John Walker*, vol. ii. p. 578.

# LECTURE IV.

ON THE LEGITIMATE PROVINCE OF THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE, IN REGARD TO RELIGION.

In the discussion of the question committed to me, it is not required that I should enter into the peculiarities of different Establishments, except in as far as occasional reference may serve the purpose of illustrating those general principles that are essential to them all, or to throw light on their common operation and results. The subject of the present Lecture is, manifestly and preeminently, one of this general and fundamental description. It is the subject on which the advocates of Establishments may almost be said mainly to rest their cause. When we speak of the constitution of the kingdom of Christ, and demonstrate from the Scriptures its independent neutrality as to all the governments of this world,—existing under all, and, unless by the silent operation of principle, directly interfering with none,—and deduce, from its spirituality and its independence, the natural sequence, that, as it intermeddles not with human governments, neither should human governments intermeddle with it,—we are met by the counterstatement, that our positive argument is all on one side; that, while we

insist on the rights and privileges and duties pertaining to the spiritual kingdom, we are losing sight of the positive obligations that lie upon civil rulers, —the heads of nations,—the administrators of their affairs,—the conservators of their interests. And very strong representations are made of the tendency of our principles,—or of our *no-principles*, on this head,—as if it were our very aim to divorce religion from civil government, and to spread the spirit of infidelity and atheism over every department of its administration. It becomes, therefore, a matter of no small importance, that our views on this topic should be explicitly stated, and distinctly understood. We shall disclose them with all frankness; let them be interpreted with all candour.

An illusion is sometimes practised on the public mind, by the use of specious and captivating similitudes; an illusion, which even intellects far above the popular standard are hardly able altogether to withstand. The most favourite of these similitudes is that derived from the analogy between the head of a family and the head of a civil community. It is the duty of a father to make provision, not for the mere corporeal health and external accommodation and comfort of his children, but also for their mental culture, and most of all, for their moral and religious training, in order to their best and highest and most permanent benefit. A king is the father of his people: it cannot but be a part, therefore, and a very essential and important part too, of his official trust, to see that the moral and religious instruction of his people is duly provided for. And

really so ingratiating have been the characters drawn of the patriotic and paternal monarch, and so beautiful the domestic *Utopias* which, on a large scale, have been sketched, and especially by spirits so imaginative, and pencils so creative, as the Chalmerian, that one is in hazard of falling in love with them unawares, and, for the time, surrendering the judgment to the power of a pleasing sentimentalism.

I have used the last word considerately. I believe the entire representation to be no better,—the mere hallucination of a benevolent fancy, aided in its vivid creations by the very vigour of mind over which it is triumphing.

That it is the incumbent duty of parents to impart religious instruction to their rising offspring, is a position which I am as far as possible from questioning. But there is a duty which takes precedence of it, and is indispensable to its being rightly and beneficially discharged; the duty, I mean, of *being religious themselves.* The injunctions contained in the New Testament on this subject, are addressed to *christian* parents. The absence indeed of christian principle in others, does not obliterate the obligation; any more than the obligation to aught that is good is obliterated by the want of moral principle, or a right disposition of heart towards the doing of it. But still, when the first duty is neglected, we do not and cannot expect the fulfilment of the second. In such cases, we do what lies in our power to supply the melancholy deficiency, by interposing our own efforts for the spiritual benefit of the rising offspring. Should it

be said, in reply—we may do the same for supplementing the deficiency of the irreligious ruler;—I answer, by observing further, that, even in the theory of it, the analogy can in no point be consistently maintained. The parental authority arises out of a *natural* relation,—the magisterial out of one that is entirely *conventional.* A son does not choose his father; subjects choose their governors, or, which is the same thing, determine the constitutional principles on which they succeed to the throne. The one relation, therefore, is founded in nature; and the authority arising out of it is one in which its subject has no choice:—the other is founded in voluntary compact, and the authority arising out of it depends upon the will of the community. For, although civil government, considered generally, exists under the divine sanction, and is, in this view, called by one Apostle, "an ordinance of God;" the government of each particular community owes its existence to human sanction, and is, in this view, called by another Apostle an "ordinance of man,"—the "creature" of man's felt necessities and free counsels—*ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει.* The child has no power of choosing what principles of religion shall first be instilled into his mind. In this he is necessarily passive. But when he becomes a man, he has a power of choice; and a power which it is not only his right, but his duty, to exercise. Now, we must not forget, under the beguiling influence of a sentimental figure, that the children of the royal parent, the father of his people, are not babes, but men and women,—on whom there lies a claim of

subjection prior and superior to his,—a claim which requires to be recognised and fulfilled according to the unconstrained dictates of their own consciences; and that a more extraordinary and self-contradictory anomaly cannot be imagined by the human mind, than that of such a community placing over themselves a governor, one of whose official prerogatives it shall be to *dictate to them their religion!*—to determine for them what principles they shall hold, and what observances they shall follow, in the worship of their Maker!—voluntarily and deliberately interposing a human authority between them and the divine, and "making over" their conscience, in the most sacred and primary of all its obligations, to the mastery of another's will!

To one great source of misapprehension, on this all-interesting subject, I have formerly alluded; I mean, the adoption, in christian countries, of the Jewish model,—or rather, of what is so called; for it is any thing but the same thing. Even if we leave out of view the general idea of the theocracy, in which the model can never have a copy,—there is, as I have already hinted, another surprising oversight in the pretended imitation. Under that economy it was *not* the magistrate that determined the religion. He had nothing whatever to say in the matter. The religion of that people was directly revealed, in all its principles and all its institutions, by Jehovah himself, and by him enjoined on their national adoption and observance. In vain is a divine sanction sought for there,—and if it is not to be found there, no less in vain will it be sought for

anywhere else,—to that insufferable outrage on the reason and common sense of mankind,—that all but infinite absurdity,—the investiture of the civil magistrate with the prerogative of authoritatively choosing a religion for his people! So far from the Jewish economy giving any countenance to such profanity, the magistrate, under it, had no authority to introduce a single alteration in any department even of the outward ceremonial of religion, without express intimation of the divine will. If a sanction for the commission of such a power to any human being could be found in the Bible, it would furnish the infidel with a stronger objection to its divinity, than any he has ever been able to educe from its contents. The Jewish was a case the very reverse of being in point. Jehovah knew human nature better than to honour it with any such trust; and the history of that people most affectingly shows, what sad work its rulers made of the power, when, impiously usurping it, and departing from the divine archetype, they presumed to dictate religions to their subjects.—The religion, we grant, was national; but it was not the choice of the magistrate—it was the appointment of God;—and its nationality, as well as every thing else pertaining to it, was from him. The question, therefore, is—Has he instituted any other national system? Has he dealt with any other nation, in this respect, as he did with the seed of Abraham? If it be answered, that Christianity has now the same divine sanction that Judaism had of old,—we grant it;—but the question relates, not to the divine sanction

of *Christianity*, but to the divine sanction of the *nationality* of Christianity. We deny that any such sanction can be produced. We have made our appeal, in support of this denial, to the only competent authority, the New-Testament Scriptures; and have endeavoured to show, that, according to that only standard, the nation which has succeeded the Jews, and to which Christianity now belongs as its instituted system of faith and worship, is the "chosen generation, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, the peculiar people," consisting of true believers in every country:—that there is no civil community, of which, in any way at all analogous to his dealing with the Jews, he himself has dictated the national faith and worship; far less committed such dictation to any fallible man.

"In the absence of that distinct and definite "authority for an Established Church in the New, "which stands forth so unequivocally in almost "every book of the Old Testament, we have to "inquire," says Dr. C., "what the circumstances "were, which, under our present dispensation, "brought on, and, as we think, justified, an enact-"ment for the provision of a national clergy, who "might teach the lessons of the gospel, and conduct "its services among the people at large."—"*As we think, justified.*" But why does he think so? Does he go, for the grounds of the justification, to the New Testament? No. He knew well they were not to be found there. On the immediate authority of its contents, we deny the right of any earthly monarch thus to interfere. We do not oppose *our*

thought to *his*, and content ourselves with saying, in reply to—"As we think, *justified*,"—"As *we* think, did *not* justify." We take surer ground. We do not leave you to balance between the weight of two human opinions; we set against *his* thought the inspired and recorded thoughts of the Apostles of Christ; and we deny the title of "the most high and mighty prince" that ever swayed a sceptre, to touch one jot of the divine institutes contained in their writings; — deny it, with incomparably greater confidence and emphasis, than we deny the right of the sovereign of one independent state to dictate changes in the constitution and government of another.

Dr. Chalmers places his justification of such interference with the institutes of the New Testament, on the part of the political rulers, on *two grounds*, —that of real *religious conviction*, and that of *state policy*;—in other words, *christian principle*, and *patriotism*.—Having spoken of the transition from Heathenism to Christianity, by imperial authority, in Rome, and from Popery to Protestantism, by royal authority, in England, he proceeds to say, —"It is well that there should be two principles, "altogether right and legitimate, on either of which "the question of a religious Establishment might "be hinged; so that, whatever the incapacity of "senators might be to decide on the first of these "principles,—that is, on the theological truth of "any system of belief,—there might remain the "other, the moral and economic principle, on which "to ground their determination, that is, on the

"fitness of any system, by the influence and the "lessons of its discipleship, to humanize a popu- "lation, and impart such habits as are best both for "the comfort and the virtue of families."*

To me there appears to be singular confusion in this statement,—a confusion imputable, not to the mind of the writer, but to the necessities of a wrong system. Are the men who are incompetent to judge of the truth of any system of belief, competent to judge of the comparative fitness of one religious creed or another to effect the ends in question? Can any system but that which is theologically true, have the effect of promoting either personal or public virtue,—of which the latter, indeed, is but the aggregate of the former? Is not Dr. C. abundantly aware of the natural aversion of the human heart to what he believes, as I do, to be the true doctrines of Christ? Yes:—no preacher, no writer, has ever, with a greater vividness and expansion of eloquence, detected and exposed all the hidden workings of that aversion. Does he not know how prevalent is the disposition to impute immoral and mischievous tendencies,—tendencies even to the subversion of the entire system of moral obligation,—to what he regards as the "true sayings of God?" Yes: full well he knows this; and full well has he met and repelled the calumnious imputation. Might he not, then, with the very same safety, leave the "*theological truth*," as leave the *virtuous and the happy tendencies*, of any system of belief, to the judgment of the potentates

* Lectures, p. 116.

and senators of this world?—And that is, with *no safety at all.* Would he commit the conservation of the nation's health to men who, instead of having made the healing art their special study, and acquired a thorough acquaintance with its best established principles and most approved practice, had hardly ever opened a medical book, or inspected a single organ of the human frame? With equal reason might he do so, as entrust the interests of religion to the kings and the statesmen of this world. There have been, there are, exceptions. But of how many of them has it ever been sadly true, that the religion of the Bible has been of all subjects the one with which they were least conversant!—what religion they have being based on politics,—official, not personal.

In passing from the change, which was effected by Constantine, of Paganism for Christianity, to the change effected at the Reformation, in the establishments of various countries in Europe, from Popery to Protestantism, Dr. C. very properly distinguishes between reasons which, in any of these cases, might *explain* the movement, accounting for it as a fact in history,—and reasons which serve to *justify* it, evincing the rectitude of its principle, as an act of the several governments of these countries. Good ground had he for saying—"There might be other "reasons, besides those which can be alleged in "vindication of this movement, resolvable neither "into conscience nor patriotism, as those which "actuated the bosom of our capricious and tyran-"nical Henry." But before proceeding to the

case of the elector of Saxony, which he selects as "the best historical example which can be given" of the reasons which "justify the change," we cannot allow him to slip thus gently over the case of Henry,—that proverb of royal passion and whim,—that monster of selfishness, and lust, and blood,—that worthy "defender of a faith" which, after being honoured for its vindication, he finally abjured, and yet retained and transmitted the complimentary title! Was *this* one of the men, to whom the advocates of Establishments would think it right to commit the interests of religion,—merely because that which was brought about by the operation of his arbitrary and vindictive passions, under the superintending control of Divine Providence, happened to be right? Little recked Henry whether it was right or wrong. The religion which he threw off was simply the religion that thwarted at the time his own lawless desires;—and the thankworthiness of this despot, in introducing (as far as he did introduce it) the Protestantism of England, was little different in its kind from the thankworthiness of those who introduced Christianity into the world by crucifying, with "wicked hands," the Prince of Life. The one and the other were the instruments of good, while the motives of both were essentially and deeply evil. And Henry, while he gratified his revenge in abjuring, and his rapacity in plundering, the old religion, gratified, at the same time, his ambition by assuming a domination near akin to Papal in the new; and his bigotry, both before and after his breach with Rome, by the proscription and

persecution of those of his subjects who presumed to dissent from any of his dogmas, and the subjugation of all consciences to his, while his was subject only to himself. The commission appointed by him, with the charge of choosing a religion for his people, proceeded with such obsequiousness to the known self-will of the royal theologian, that what was received and sanctioned by the convocation as the national standard of orthodox faith and practice, was but a submissive transcript of his own tenets; and the requisition of conformity in the creed and worship of his people varied with the variation of those tenets, which, at every change, were maintained with equal dogmatism and equal violence. Such was the first supreme head of the Anglican church — invested by parliament with *jure divino* power to "visit and repress, redress, reform, order, correct, restrain, or amend, all errors, heresies, abuses, offences, contempts, and enormities, which fell under any spiritual authority or jurisdiction!"

I am aware that this capricious despot, equally jealous of his ecclesiastical and his civil supremacy, was succeeded by a prince of a different character, in the person of Edward;—but his comparatively short reign gave place in turn to the superstitious and tragical career of Mary, retracing in fire and blood the steps of advancement which had been made,—a career of which the still shorter continuance was the only providential alleviation;—and hers again to the able but haughty dominion of the Virgin Queen, whose sternly jealous sensitiveness of all that touched her prerogative, or ventured,

whether in theory or in practice, to dispute her supremacy in any of its departments, was felt alike by Romanist and by Puritan.

And the strange fluctuations in the national faith and worship during the successive reigns of the Tudor dynasty, presented at the time, and still present in history, a striking and edifying exemplification of the working of the principle which places the choice of a people's religion in the hands of its rulers; or, that I may not load *them* with any peculiarity of perverseness or folly that does not belong to them,—in any human hands whatsoever.

But let us take up for a little the case appealed to by Dr. Chalmers, as the best specimen by which the magisterial power of choice and of change can be justified:—"Perhaps," he says, "the best historical example that can be given of them," namely, of the "reasons which justify the change" from popery to protestantism—"will be found in the "Elector of Saxony, who established the Protestant "religion in his kingdom, under the impulse of "the Protestant faith, or of a sincere Protestant "feeling in his own heart. *The faith of the* "*monarch justified the part which he took in it*— "*or the proposal of such a change;—and it was* "*the faith of his subjects which justified the part* "*they took in it — or their acquiescence in the* "*change.*"—Now, without entering at all into the history of the case, I am anxious to fasten your attention on the statement contained in this last sentence (which I have read emphatically) because an attentive consideration of it will bring out some

important principles on the present branch of our subject.—Observe, then—

(1.) "The faith of the monarch justified the "part which *he* took in it—or the *proposal* of such "a change."—Ought it not, in the first instance, to be inquired, whether the thing itself, which the monarch did, or proposed to do, was a right thing? —His faith in protestantism might prove it right for him to avow his principles, and openly profess protestantism, as an individual; but it must not be assumed, that his own faith in protestantism proves it right for him to establish protestantism in his electoral capacity, as the religion of his kingdom. There is a *petitio principii* involved in this, from which we are entitled to withhold our assent.—A man may be right in his faith, and far wrong in the means he adopts for promoting it. Many men have been quite as sincere in persecuting heretics, as in holding the faith from which heresy is a dissent. The rectitude of the faith will not justify the persecution. While their principles are right, their conscience is under error as to the legitimate methods of advancing their propagation. And on this account, we are not sure if we should give our unqualified assent to the subsequent position of Dr. C., that sincerity, or conscientiousness, would serve for the vindication of James II. and Charles I., and the Elector of Saxony, in their attempts to establish, respectively, their own creed and worship, whether (as in the two former cases) they failed, or (as in the last) succeeded.—It is admitted, that success or failure is not, by any means, a decisive

evidence of right or wrong; but it is questioned, whether *mere sincerity* can be a sufficient vindication of what is in itself wrong, when the conscience is in possession of sufficient means of information.

(2.) "The faith of the subjects justified the part which *they* took in it—or their *acquiescence* in the change."—From this it follows of course, being almost, indeed, an identical proposition, that the subjects would *not* have been justifiable in such acquiescence, but for the coincidence of their own faith with the faith of their prince. It follows further,—that the Elector himself would not have been justifiable in the part he took,—or rather, in proceeding to carry his proposal into effect by the actual establishment of protestantism,—but for this coincidence of the faith of his subjects with his own. From this comes out immediately the general conclusion, that no monarch can be justifiable in establishing any faith that is not the faith of his subjects; or, at the very least, of the large majority of them. And thence, once more,—since we ought not to determine general principles from particular favourable cases only,—there arises, on the supposition of a difference existing (which is no impossible thing) between the faith of the prince and that of his subjects, a somewhat awkward dilemma:—either the prince must establish the faith of his people, and himself be a non-conformist, or a hypocrite; or he must establish his own, and make his people non-conformists or hypocrites—conscientious rebels, or submissive dissemblers. Of the sentence in which Dr. C.

represents sincerity as vindicating the attempts, "both of him who succeeded and of those who failed, to establish their own doctrine as the national faith," he somewhat qualifies the sentiment by the closing words — "even as it would serve for the vindication of 500 men, if the power, instead of being concentrated in one individual, were lodged in such an assembly, *and they gave forth their collective voice in favour of an establishment which coincided with the faith of the majority.*" This leads me to ask—

(3.) Is the only ground, then, on which Dr. C. considers an establishment to be legitimately founded, the circumstance of the religion that is established being previously the religion of the majority?—If so, then what becomes of the prototype of all Establishments of Christianity—what becomes of the case of Constantine? He established the right religion; but not the religion of the majority of his subjects. And then there is a double supposition suggests itself, by which we are again landed in a double dilemma. The faith of the monarch may change, and not that of the majority of his subjects, —or the faith of the subjects may change, and not that of the monarch. If it is the majority that must decide the point, then, in the former case, where is the power of the ruler?—and if the power of decision lies with the ruler, then where, in the latter case, is the liberty of the people,—their liberty in regard to the very first and most important of all their rights,—nay, in regard to the highest and most sacred of all their obligations,—a right, chartered

to them by Heaven's own covenant,—an obligation bound upon them by Heaven's own authority?

This must ever be a question of superlative difficulty to the abettors of Establishments,—where the right lies, to determine the faith and the worship,—the ecclesiastical creed and constitution,—to which the monopoly of state-endowment is to be appropriated. Had Henry VIII. the right, when he changed it from popery to protestantism? Had his daughter Mary the right, when she changed it back from protestantism to popery? Had her sister Elizabeth the right, when she restored protestantism again? There are two questions, between which there can never fail to be a serious contention—what is right *in itself*,—and what is right *in the judgment and conscience of the ruling power*. The answers to the two questions may not, by any means, always be found coincident. Whence, then, is the determination to come? It is dilemma still:—for if you plead that no religion can be entitled to an Establishment but the true, you deny the right and set at nought the conscience of the ruler;—and if you plead for the right and conscience of the ruler, you expose the true religion to not a few chances of exclusion. And the principle is the same,—the questions and difficulties the same,—whatever be the form of government. A representative government does not essentially alter the case:—for the inquiry still recurs—whether the members of the representative assembly are to decide according to their own private sentiments and conscientious convictions of right, or according to what they know

to be the sentiments and convictions of the majority of their respective constituents.*

A system which invests man with a power which his Maker never meant him to wield, and for which, consequently, he is utterly incompetent, we might expect to find not very consistent with itself, and, in the statements and reasonings of its advocates, not very clear and uniform, either as to the principle on which the possession of the power is rested, or as to the legitimate extent of its exercise. From

* On this essential question, writers in support of Establishments have never agreed; and at this day they are as far from one mind as ever: some holding, as their principle of vindication, the claim of the religion of *the majority*,—some the exclusiveness of the claim of the *true religion*,—and some the claim of the magistrate to establish *his own*. There must be unsoundness in the whole theory, when there are such differences amongst its advocates as to so essential a point, a point affecting the very basis on which the whole, had it any basis at all, must rest. Let any one of the present defenders of Establishments try to frame an answer to the reasoning, so simple and conclusive, of an eminent churchman, to whom, as an expositor, the christian world at large, in our own country especially, stands so much indebted—The Rev. Thomas Scott: — "If no way of defending our Establishment can be devised, which would not, if fairly applied, defend the establishment of popery, of Mahommedanism, or of Pagan idolatry, by the authority of kings and rulers, I must acknowledge the cause to be desperate. Yet, if it be a *right* of kings and rulers to prescribe the creed and manner of worship, with its appendages, to their subjects, and to enforce their concurrence, it must be equally the right of *all* kings; for they all think, or profess to think, their own religion to be the true religion. Again, if it be the *duty* of kings and rulers to prescribe these things to their subjects, it is equally the duty of all kings, and for the same reason. This is the *palladium* of those who oppose Establishments; and how shall we deprive them of it?" —*Evil of Separation, by the Rev. Thomas Scott.*

the terms already quoted, it might be supposed that Dr. C. is a supporter of that view of the theory of Establishments, which bases the right to establish upon the fact of there being a majority of the community favouring a particular faith:—and yet the whole drift of his subsequent reasoning goes to place the right of determining the national creed and worship in the constitutional government itself, —and that, not by the simple process of inquiring into the state of the fact, as to the already prevailing religion, but by the exercise of its own judgment; and that judgment to be regulated and decided by the two considerations—what is *true*,—and what is *best for the country*:—the former to be settled by theological investigation; the latter, by recorded historical experience, and the principles of patriotism. We heartily acquiesce in the truth of the general sentiment, of which he considers the demonstration impregnable, although he could not then afford time for introducing it,—"that "wherever there is access to the light and the "opportunities of our present day, and there be, "notwithstanding, a wrong belief in religion, some "element of moral evil might be detected in the "process which led to it." But what of that? Have we reason, either from our knowledge of human nature when exposed to the temptations of the world in its higher and more seductive regions, or from the recorded experience of past ages, to entertain so great a confidence of the absence or the weakness of the "elements of moral evil" in the bosoms of the potentates and the statesmen of

any country on earth, as to warrant our assuring ourselves of a right decision,—of their invariably eschewing error and embracing truth?—That the means of knowledge and of right conviction are abundant, is true,—and a truth for which we have just cause of gratitude; but unless men have the disposition to avail themselves of the means, and to avail themselves of them with earnestness and with candour, "what doth it profit?" On how slender and unsatisfactory a foundation should our confidence rest, in a question of so momentous import as the settling the religion of a nation, were we to take our estimate from the average of theological knowledge, or of religious character, in high places! As for our own hereditary monarchs, is it not rather the crown that assigns them their religion, than their religion that assigns them the crown? Are they not born heirs to the British throne, and therefore born protestants, and members of the Church of England, let their subsequent characters be what they may,—christians *ex officio*, although they should be infidels and profligates in conduct? And are they not, as kings, independently of all regard to personal religion or virtue, the successive heads on earth of that church? I would by no means affix an unqualified stigma to the character of our own legislature, whether hereditary or representative; but I presume none will charge me with being wide of the truth, if I fix the average of acquaintance with theology and of experimental piety, amongst its members, at no very high mark in the scale. Instead of pronouncing any judg-

ment of my own, I may refer to that of one, who, both from acquaintance with his Bible, and from the experienced and consistently evinced effects of its truths upon his own heart, knew well what true religion is,—and who, as a statesman of high eminence, and of ample and long-continued opportunity for observation by converse with men of all political parties, was abundantly qualified for forming a correct estimate. When writing respecting certain measures, which were proposed in the year 1800, for restricting, as to Dissenters and Methodists, the provisions of the Toleration Act, and which were to be enforced by the sanction of "a fine for the first offence, and imprisonment for the second,"—measures which he deprecated and opposed,—the late Mr. Wilberforce says, in few but significant words—"In short, so *utterly ignorant* in all religious matters, is the gay world, and the busy, and the high, and the political, that any measure government should propose would be easily carried."*

And these are the men who are to be our legislators in religion! These are the men, on whom, Dr. C. says, "there is a loud and instant call for a wise and righteous decision," — who were "never more loudly called to be ripe and ready on the principles" on which that decision must be formed. For the decision is no trivial one. "We cannot imagine a heavier misfortune to "our beloved land, than that a measure so pregnant "with consequences both to the present and future "generations, should cast up at random, or in the

* Life, Vol. II. Page 362.

" eddying whirl of party and political movements;
" —instead of coming forth as an unfettered, but
" withal well-weighed deliverance, on the part of
" intelligent and high-principled men;—best of all,
" if done on the greatest, and which should be
" the first consideration, of What is truth?—but, if
" not disposed to entertain this question, next best,
" when done on the consideration of, What is the
" most effectual regimen for training the successive
" generations of a country in the virtues of good
" citizenship, and so as shall be likeliest to insure
" for the commonwealth the blessings of a moral
" and religious population?"*—I have said, and I repeat, that the decisions on these two forms of the question must necessarily be coincident. If they differ, the one or the other must be false; unless we are prepared to put up with the strange position, that what is not accordant with "truth" may yet be "the most effectual regimen for training successive generations in the virtues of good citizenship, and insuring for the commonwealth the blessings of a moral and religious population."—Dr. C. admits, indeed, that "although the two considerations are distinct from each other, there is a real harmony between them;" but he assigns different modes of bringing them to a settlement:—"For the determination of the one "question, the lights of conscience and erudition "ought to suffice in every well-principled and well-"educated assembly:—for the determination of the "other, it will be enough to consult the lights of

* Lectures, page 123.

" history and economic science."*—It would appear that by "*erudition*," the Doctor must intend especially *sacred* erudition—biblical literature—theological knowledge;—for he adds—" We can see no " incongruity, no extravagance, but the contrary, " in the supposition of its being quite competent " for an assembly of legislators, to decide on the " former of these principles, or to give their suf- " frages for the maintenance of a certain national " creed, *as well on the ground of that divine autho- " rity which has prescribed the lessons of our " education for heaven*, as on the ground of that " human judgment, or expediency, which tells of " the best education for the virtues of good citizen- " ship on earth."†—Is Dr. C., then, really ready to commit the settlement of the nation's creed, or the determination of the question (so solemn in its principles, so portentous in its consequences)—"What is truth?"—to the biblical " erudition " of a British cabinet, or a British parliament, or even to the imperial theology of the " defenders of the faith?" Theologians have always been rather noted for their dexterity in splitting hairs, and dividing and subdividing the splits, and thus giving practical proof of the infinite divisibility of thought as well as of matter; and we have had royal theologians, in the line of our kings, who have been somewhat tinctured with the propensity, and fain to try their hands at the process. And if they had only allowed their lieges the privilege of splitting hairs in their own way, who had a right to

* Lectures, page 124. † Ibid.

prevent them? But "there's the rub." The lieges must split as the king splits; or, should they have presumed to deviate from the royal method, something thicker than a hair might perchance have been twisted for them :—

"Seest thou yon *bow?* It hath a *string.*"*

In the sentence just quoted from Dr. C., the phrase, "*a certain national creed,*" is general and unqualified. He anticipates the startling objection to which the proposition is liable,—that it would "transform the senate-house into an arena of "theological conflict, and senators into wrangling "polemics, who, to be accomplished for their task, "would need to grapple with whole libraries, with "the tomes of the mighty controversialists in former "ages; or, at least, it may be thought, to be deep-"read both in the fathers of the christian church, and "in the fathers of our own reformation."† He treats this as "exaggeration;" and, since the terms of the hypothetical description are his own, it may be so. But he makes an important admission :—"It *would* "*have been truth,* had the proposition been to devolve "upon civil rulers, or to devolve upon a parliament, "the office of settling, and of filling up, the national "creed, even to its minutest articles, or of framing "the whole polity of a church, from the highest "to the lowest of its office-bearers, from the most "solemn ordinances of its ritual to the most in-"considerable observances of its ceremonial and its "forms. The settlement of these is the proper

* Byron. † Lectures, page 125.

"work of ecclesiastics."* We might have been tempted to ask here two questions:—The first,—*Where is the limit?* Where is the line to be drawn between leading articles and minutiæ, either in regard to a creed, or in regard to forms of worship? Who is not aware how endless has been the diversity here? Have there ever been two minds that would draw this line precisely alike? One might have thought it, too, of incomparably greater consequence, to have an intelligent and scriptural settlement of grand essential principles, than the minute filling-up of inferior truths and of "inconsiderable observances and forms." Yet the former Dr. C. would entrust to the legislative assemblies of the land, even without their "grappling with whole libraries," and being "deep-read in the fathers,"—(and I admit they would be far better qualified for the task were they "deep-read" in Paul and Peter, and James and John),—and the settlement of the other he would leave, as their proper work, to ecclesiastics!—a rather odd division of the labour, surely,—the ignorant and ill-qualified fixing the greater and more essential articles, and the erudite and well-qualified those of minor consequence!—But our second question is—*Has it always, has it ever been so?* Has the settlement of the nation's creed and the nation's worship, ever been left, either in great matters or in small, to ecclesiastics alone?—Was it so by Henry VIII.?—Was it so by Elizabeth?—Was it so, when the Convocation was suspended by the royal will of George I.?—

* Lectures, page 117.

Was it so, when, upon the Confession of Faith of the Scottish Church, after having been compiled at Westminster, and approved by parliament, being adopted by the General Assembly of that church, with certain qualifications,—both the act of adoption and the appended qualifications were never so much as noticed, but passed over by parliament *sub silentio?*—Was there ever, indeed, any thing relative to the constitution of the church left for *final* decision to ecclesiastics *alone*, and determined by their *sole* authority? We shall see, immediately, that it would have been unreasonable it should be so.

But I pass from these questions, in their general form, to the answer which Dr. C. may be considered as giving to the former, respecting the bounding lines of *majus* and *minus* in articles of faith and forms of worship, by the fact of his taking his stand in the grand distinction between *popery* and *protestantism*, as the two systems assumed by him for the illustration of his principles. On this point, he expresses himself in very strong terms, as to the easy determination of their comparative claims to preference on either of the two grounds of *truth* or of *policy*. "This was not a question, "which could only be resolved in an assembly of "priests, or of scholastics; but a question that "might be rightly entertained, and rightly decided "also, in any assembly of well-educated English-"men. We could not imagine a more testing "evidence of an incompetent and vulgarized par-"liament, than that it should not be qualified to

"decide the question between the merits of pro-
"testantism and popery;—or which of the two
"systems, not in respect of policy, but in respect
"of absolute truth and of sacred obligation, is the
"most worthy of being upholden as the national
"faith of these realms."*—This sentiment is largely amplified, and variously illustrated. The drift of it is plain. It is to mitigate the obvious difficulty of legislation, in matters of faith, by legislators so ill qualified, on the average, for the task. It is not for me to say, what amount of acquaintance might be found in the body of our senators on the theology of the points in controversy between the popish and the protestant faith,—although I am not without apprehension that the result, on a commission of examination being appointed, might not, in many instances, be over-creditable to the information of these "well-educated Englishmen," or to the interest they could be induced to take in such questions.—But, instead of following out this inquiry, and commenting on the facilities of information enumerated by Dr. C., there are a few general observations I wish to offer, for the sake of bringing out fundamental principles;—these being what I am most solicitous to ascertain.

1. On the supposition of all being granted for which Dr. C. pleads,—that there could be no difficulty to any "well-educated Englishman," or to any assembly of such Englishmen, in deciding between Popery and Protestantism, whether on the ground of theological argument or of historical experience;

* Lectures, pp. 125, 126.

—of truth or of policy,—on the supposition of all being granted—*it is not enough. Protestantism* is a comprehensive word. The variety contained under it, both of doctrinal sentiment and of ecclesiastical polity, is very large indeed. All doctrine may be found under it, from the most extravagant Calvinism to the most meagre Socinianism, with all the grades, and all the aberrations, wilder and more sober, between the extremes. And then, as to church-government, or ecclesiastical polity,—Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, and Independency, are all alike protestant; and, how convenient soever it may be to speak of such differences as of light consideration,—all the three essentially diverse from each other, and far from being held thus lightly by their respective adherents, and especially those of them who feel their consciences bound by divine prescription.—Who, then, is to decide between these protestant diversities? The present actual existence of the creeds and constitutions of the different establishments make the question appear an easy one. But we are entitled to suppose no establishment existing, and one to be framed, and to be framed, observe, *by the government.* It is manifestly a government question. It is government money—the money of the public treasury—that is to be expended in the endowment of such a church; and it must therefore be a government question—*how it is to be bestowed.* It is for king, lords, and commons, to determine what system of doctrines, what ecclesiastical constitution, what class of clerical functionaries, shall be favoured with the monopoly,

as being likely to prove the most conducive to the ends of the public weal. Are worldly statesmen, then, I ask again, and ask with emphasis, really competent to the determination of such a question? My opponent himself being judge, the answer is in the negative. It is "*the proper work of ecclesiastics.*" Then comes the query—*What* ecclesiastics? And is it not manifest, that the settlement of *this* question is the very same thing with the settlement of the original question itself? If Episcopalian ecclesiastics, we have episcopacy established;—if Presbyterian, presbyterianism; if Calvinistic, Calvinism; if Socinian, Socinianism;—if an equal proportion of each, we have a reciprocally neutralizing influence, issuing in no decision, but in the reverting of the question to parliament, with an appeal on behalf of the parties respectively, each for the special favour to itself. And the question, who should be "kept out" and who should be "let in," is not a question to be trifled with by making light of the differences between the different classes of protestants; for the differences are *not* light. They are not light even between the different parties of those held orthodox;—and Dr. C., in his estimate, appears to have forgotten that there were any others.

Then, 2. Even as to popery and protestantism, we cannot allow the case to be one of such easy decision as Dr. C. represents it,—when the decision is left to kings and statesmen. We have a protestant government; and it is of a protestant legislature that Dr. C. speaks, when he represents the determination of the question as costing so little

pains. But the question must be taken up more generally. We are not entitled charitably to suppose kings and statesmen to be influenced, in their investigations and their measures, by the unmingled solicitude to discover what is truth, or what has, from experience, been proved most conducive to a nation's freedom, virtue, and prosperity. This may be charitable; but the records of history will not permit us to pronouce it safe. It may do for a theory; but it cannot be trusted to in practice. Are there no biassing influences, that operate on the minds, and affect the decisions, of statesmen and princes? Has their inquiry always been, what will be most conducive to the liberty of their subjects? —never, what will be most conducive to their own aggrandizement, the extension of their prerogative, the gratification of their ambition, the gemming and jewelling of their crown? Protestantism has been incomparably more favourable to the civil and religious liberties of nations than popery. Granted. But does it follow, on *this* account, that it must always command the preference of the rulers of those nations? Is there no account to be made of the question—which has been most favourable to the ambition and the despotism of princes? And if the whole history of Europe settles the question on both sides of it, will any friend of civil and religious liberty deem it a light matter to entrust the settlement of the creed and ecclesiastical constitution of a country to monarchs and statesmen, where there exist political temptations, so many and so powerful, to sway them? Truth will ever be found

working beneficially to the best interests, temporal as well as spiritual, social as well as personal, of mankind; and the God of truth has, in his word, wisely withheld such a power from fallible creatures. There is no example of it in its history,—no permission of it in its precepts,—no principle that admits of it among its doctrines. Religious and civil liberty go hand in hand. History tells us much of the use that has been made of superstition, in fastening and entailing political degradation and bondage; of the forging of the chains of secular oppression, by the hands of a bigoted priesthood, in the caverns and fires of a gloomy fanaticism. Ecclesiastical and political despotism have lived and thriven, and drooped and died, together. Whence comes it, even now, that the catholic despots of the European continent tremble for the diffusion of knowledge? Why do they impose penal restraints on speech and on the press? Why are they so vigilantly jealous of the importation and circulation of foreign literature—the literature of free countries? Why, but because they are well aware that *free thought* may lead to other kinds of freedom? Why are they so specially averse to all discussions in religion; to the introduction of religious works, and even of the Bible itself, and to the free intercommunion of religious parties? Why, but because they know the tendency of *religious* liberty to conduct to *political* liberty?—of the enlargement and elasticity of mind arising from the entrance of knowledge and the unfettered exercise of its faculties, to engender dissatisfaction with a state of servile vassalage, and a

spirit of manhood that will not long endure it? Is it not that the despot's crown is safe on his own head, only so long as he can prevent the heads of his subjects from exercising the privilege of thought?—that, as soon as a people assume the prerogative, given them by nature and by God, of thinking for themselves, the tyrant's prerogative is at end?

3. Why expose true religion at all to any such risks?—and why hold out to false religion any such lures? The dread of the prevalence of popery is at present extreme. And, improbable as it is that a system founded, to such an extent, on ignorance and darkness, should rise to the ascendant in an age of spreading knowledge and advancing light, yet in other views it is not impossible. It is in many respects a religion palatable to human nature, which is exceedingly fond of placing devotion in external observances,—of gaining heaven by any thing that may be called its own, without costing the trouble of knowledge, or the inward cultivation of personal sanctity;—a religion that is satisfied with penance without penitence,—that imparts absolution for money, and enables a man to be pious by proxy, and devolve the care of his salvation on another. On many a mind has it practised its strong delusions;—and it may practise them still. But why should protestants be afraid of its prevalence? Let them be in earnest in the maintenance of truth, as the only legitimate and the only effectual means of arresting the progress of error. So far as popery prevails by fair means,—by the zeal of its priesthood, by the circulation of its doctrines, by argu-

ment, by persuasion,—who is entitled to restrain it, except by the same means, the diffusion of Bible light, by which those who are groping in the darkness of ignorance may see to read its errors, and become proof against its illusions? When we look at history, we cannot be greatly surprised that those who imagine there is reason to apprehend *popish ascendency* should tremble for the liberties and the religion of their country. But we have one radical cure for all these trembling apprehensions. The very word *ascendency* involves in it the possession of political power, and ecclesiastical supremacy and endowment. This has all along been its meaning. From this, in the protestant countries of Europe, popery has been cast down; and it is to this that it restlessly aspires. But the object of its aspiration exists only so long as the system exists that unites the church with the state. Take away the prize, and the competition will cease. Disunite ecclesiastical and political power;—withdraw the secular allurements—the endowments, the places, the patronage, the wealth, the honour, the dominion,—and leave popery, in common with every other system, to its own resources;—destroying hope by destroying the object of hope,—annihilating ambition and avarice, by depriving each of its aim. Let *principle* be thus left to itself, without a motive but the love of Christ and of souls, and zeal for the salvation of the world. Let all religious parties be placed on a level, and allowed, respectively, to work out this principle, according to the measure in which it exists, by their own energies and their own resources.

Give statesmen their own proper affairs to mind, and the ministers of religion theirs. Let the secular and the sacred be parted;—the temporal and the spiritual kingdom, each maintaining and advancing its own interests by its own distinct and appropriate means. Then—where will be the fears of popish ascendency? The union of church and state has rendered the idea so habitual of the growth of popery leading ultimately to its supplanting protestantism as the *dominant* religion,—for this is meant by its *ascendency*,—that it is difficult to dispossess the mind of this morbid dread. But let there be *no* dominant religion;—let a final end be put to every distinction of the kind;—and where is the protestant spirit in the land, that would not give its fears to the winds? I would denounce such a protestant, as unworthy of the name,—who should be so trustless of his principles,—so destitute of faith in the power and the ultimate triumph of truth,—as to retain them for a moment. Let protestantism and popery, by all means, have a fair trial. Instead of setting the senate of our country to debate which of the two should have its sanction and exclusive support, let all such questions be banished from parliamentary discussion;—let all state support be withdrawn from both;—and let it thus be made apparent which has in it most of the spiritual, and which most of the political;—which will be most zealous and most devotedly active, when, freed from the ambition, the one of retaining and the other of acquiring ascendency, the only legitimate motive of religious activity will be left to operate alone.

4. With the eloquence of an indignation in which we heartily sympathize,—the indignation of offended protestantism,—Dr. C. denounces the proposition to *endow popery*. Mark the terms in which he gives utterance to his indignant and determined remonstrance:—"Should, in particular, the mon-"strous proposition ever be entertained, not to "tolerate (for that is quite as it should be) but to "endow popery;—not perhaps to abolish, but at "least to abridge the legal funds for the support of "protestantism, and at all events to uphold an "anti-scriptural, and with this aggravation, that it "should be at the expense and with the diminution "of a scriptural faith;—*let us hope that there is still* "*enough, not of fiery zeal, but of calm, resolute, and* "*withal enlightened principle in the land, to resent* "*the outrage,—enough of energy and reaction, in* "*the revolted sense of this great country, to meet and* "*to overbear it.*" We join, with all our hearts, both in the deprecation and in the trust. But Dr. C. must excuse us for applying the principle and the terms of his remonstrance in another way. Suppose there is a large proportion of the population—the christian and conscientious population — of the country, who cannot go along with him in his light estimate of the differences among protestants; —suppose, for example, right or wrong, they are of the opinion that there is a large and an increasing amount of popish principles and practice in the Church of England;—that some of her doctrines are anti-scriptural, and her entire hierarchy an outrage on the simplicity of the New Testament;—and

that the connexion itself of the church with the state, even for its support, is an abrogation of the institutions of its only Lawgiver, and the whole system of its secular establishment deeply injurious to its character, its honour, and its prosperity, and thus to the spread of truth, and the interests of mankind:—suppose all this; does not the same principle come into application? And are we not warranted to adopt the terms that have just been cited, and to express our hope, that "if the legal funds for the support of" one species of "protestantism," which we consider as "anti-scriptural" and pernicious, are not only used to maintain such a system, but are so used "with this aggravation, that it is at the expense and diminution of a scriptural faith," being unjustly and in violation of conscience, drawn from the resources of those by whom that faith is held—"there is still enough, not of fiery zeal, but of calm, resolute, and withal enlightened principle," among the dissenters of "the land, to resent the outrage,—enough of energy and reaction in the revolted sense of" that large body of the population of "this great country, to meet and to overbear it?"

But I am diverging to a subject which belongs to next lecture. I return, for what remains of this,—having shown the incompetency of earthly governments to legislate on such subjects, and the equal folly and danger, as well as subversion of divine authority, in placing such power in such hands,—to the question itself—What *is* the legitimate province of the civil magistrate in regard to religion?

And here again, our question is—"What saith the Scripture?" There is much there, sometimes, comprised in few words. We have the general order of our divine Master in a single emphatic sentence—"Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things which are God's." We are not to imagine any thing so inconsistent with the uncompromising truth, the perfect sunlight simplicity of that Master's character, as that in these words he gave an evasive answer to an insidious question,—that he thus met guile with guile, and foiled the dissemblers with a weapon of their own. He meant what he said. And what he said expresses a plain distinction. The distinction manifestly is, between things *civil* and things *sacred*,—the rights of earthly governors, and the rights of the divine. The words were addressed to Jews. Those Jews were under the obligations of their own law:—and if their paying tribute to Cæsar had, in any way, been incompatible with the obedience they owed to God, they could not have been permitted, far less enjoined, to pay it. God, in his providence, had brought them under the yoke of Rome; and Jesus teaches them, that what was exacted, by those who had the mastery over them, for the support of the imperial government, it was no infraction of their higher allegiance to pay. The payment was not a *religious act*. Had it been so, it would have been a rendering to Cæsar of the things that were God's. Under their own theocracy, there was, properly speaking, no distinction between these. God and Cæsar were one. Jehovah was both,—

the Divine Head at once of their ecclesiastical constitution and of their civil government. Under this peculiar economy, what pertained to the one pertained to the other. But when the words are applied to Christians, the case is different. We are under no theocracy. There is no such identity now in the object to whom we render our civil and our religious homage. The distinction, however, remains between the two descriptions of debts and duties. We are still subjects of God, or of Christ, —and subjects of Cæsar. How, then, are we now to distinguish between what we owe to the one, and what we owe to the other? Are we not to regard *religious* debts and duties as what we are to render to the one, and *civil* debts and duties as what we are to render to the other? There *is* a distinction, —a distinction which, generally speaking, is sufficiently well understood, between things civil and things sacred,—between the duties of the first and those of the second table of the law. If, in some points, difficulty be experienced in tracing with precision the line of demarcation between them, it may be a question deserving consideration, how far such difficulty may not, wholly or in part, find its cause in the very habits of thought,—so inveterate, and consequently so hard of segregation into their respective elements,—which have been engendered by their unnatural intermixture. The very designation of a *civil magistrate* ought to be understood as defining his official functions, and limiting them to the civil department. When he comes upon religious ground, he steps beyond his province. All

that is properly religious lies between God and the conscience. No human authority is entitled to interfere with it. If, while we are, conscientiously and cheerfully, "rendering unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," Cæsar should overstep the limit of his commission, and demand of us, in one jot or tittle, "the things that are God's;"—in such a case, disobeying Cæsar is not disobeying the God who has enjoined submission to Cæsar; because, in going beyond his legitimate boundary, Cæsar himself is the transgressor;—he has interfered with what did not belong to him; he has presumptuously intruded into the province of the King of kings:—and if *he* transgresses in commanding, it can never follow that *we* should sanction and share his transgression by obeying.

It is a most important principle on the present subject, that the *right of rulers to enact* must be coincident in extent with the *obligation of subjects to obey*. Religion is a matter in which no man can be under obligation to obey a fellow-man; and for this reason, it is a matter in which no man can have a right to enact for a fellow-man. The right cannot go beyond the obligation. If it could, there would be two obligations imposed on the unfortunate subject of Cæsar and of God,—by both of which he is bound, and yet both of which, contradictory as they are of each other, it is impossible for him to fulfil! The authority of civil rulers, moreover, involves the power of *coercion*,—that is, of compulsion by penalty. The sword is the only instrument of that power; and, to the extent to which the power legitimately

reaches, the sword must not be borne in vain. But religion admits not of coercion. The two terms can never be made to comport. The one belongs to heaven, the other to earth; and they are, in their natures, as far asunder. They mutually neutralize and destroy each other. Where coercion begins, religion ends. All compulsion here is impiety,—a profane and presumptuous usurpation of the paramount rights of Deity, — an overt act of treason against the Supreme Ruler,—an attempt to force one of *his* subjects to withdraw his allegiance from Him and to give it to another—to a creature, to a dependent! Were some underling of a mighty prince to claim for himself, and threaten to exact by severe penalties, the homage which the laws appropriate to the prince himself, he would be chargeable with a presumption less flagrant, even by infinitude, than that of which the prince is guilty, in compelling obedience to his enactments on the part of those who, in their consciences, regard such obedience as involving in it the "rendering to Cæsar the things that are God's"—the abstraction, for the honour of a human master, of what is due exclusively to the Divine. The civil magistrate can have no power in religion; because the power which belongs to him is, in its very nature, coercive,—and in religion such power is inconsistent with *its* very nature, and incapable of being exercised.

I know not a more admirable principle than that which is laid down by an acute and philosophical, as well as pious writer, in the present controversy—Coventry Dick, Esq. in his Dissertation on Church

Polity:—"Here we may pause for a moment, to learn how we may best fulfil the meaning of poets, philosophers, and jurists, when they warn us to lay the foundation of civil society in an acknowledgment of Divine Providence. It is by owning first all the rights of Providence. Observing that it has framed man a religious being, and, in that department of his nature, subjected him to no intermediate superior, but directly to God, we are taught, neither to prescribe, nor limit, nor enforce the inward or outward homage to which that subjection calls him. The state which, acting upon this lesson, anxiously provides for freedom of worship, and sensitively withdraws its rulers from the province of conscience, is of all states the most holy and religious; presents in its laws a perpetual homage to Divine Providence; and may be truly said to have laid its foundations in an act of worship."* This is at once the true philosophy, and the true theology, of the case. The sentiment is as beautiful as it is scriptural and just. The most truly religious thing a state can do, is devoutly to acknowledge the exclusive appropriation of all religious duties to God, and scrupulously to abstain from all interference.

In regard to the use which civil rulers *have actually made* of what may be called their religious prerogative, we may well apply a favourite diary phrase of the late Mr. Wilberforce, briefly indicating his impression of both public and private doings—"*sad work!*" Dr. C. may refer, with a delight in

* Pages 16, 17.

which we can all sympathize, to the character and conduct of particular kings of Judah and Israel; but take the average of those kings,—especially of the latter, among whom there is hardly an exception on the side of goodness,—what "*sad work!*" And take the average of the line of monarchs in our own country, or in any country,—have we not still, in this department, to exclaim—"*sad work!*" But we enter not now into such details. We hold by the *principle.* What was competent to the very best kings of Israel or Judah to do, it is not now competent to the best kings of any other nation to do. What was right under that dispensation, as belonging to its peculiar nature, would be wrong under ours, to whose nature it is entirely alien. This, with the mischief as well as the impiety of any imitation of the most approved acts, even of such men as Hezekiah, Josiah, and Jehoshaphat, we may hereafter show.

Meantime I must close, by answering explicitly to the question—What is the magistrate's province in regard to religion?—that his true and legitimate province is—to have NO PROVINCE AT ALL. *As a man,* he is bound to believe the truths, and obey the precepts, of the word of God:—*as a magistrate,* he is bound to fulfil all his official functions on christian principles, from christian motives, and according to christian precepts,—as every man is, in every condition and every relation of life:—but *authority* in religion he has none. Religion has authority over him,—the same as it has over all; but in it, or over it, or over his subjects in aught that pertains to it, his

authority is null. If he exercises it, it is the exercise of power without right. The example and the influence of a truly religious king may be eminently and extensively beneficial;—but *the sword* must be confined to the civil department, as that which alone comes within his appropriate jurisdiction. In all that relates to religion, the command of Him whose exclusive dominion is over the conscience and the heart would be—"Put up thy sword into the sheath." We may be charged for saying so, with "reckoning it the very perfection of enlightened patriotism in a magistrate, when, like Gallio, he cares for none of these things."* We are not, however, so weak, as to be moved by Bible words, unless they are pointed against us with a Bible meaning. We are inclined to think that Gallio was both right and wrong; and that his conduct, as a magistrate, has been visited with much too unqualified a condemnation. When Gallio said—"If it were an act of injustice, or of licentious villany, O ye Jews, it were reason that I should bear with you; but if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, see ye yourselves to it; for I will be no judge of such matters;"—he was right: he made a correct and sensible distinction between causes that came within his legitimate province as a judge, and causes that lay beyond it,—between causes that belonged to civil, and causes that belonged to ecclesiastical jurisdiction,—between causes of criminal jurisprudence, and causes of religious casuistry:—and in summarily dismissing the latter,

* Lectures, p. 84.

he acted with consistent propriety; although in his style of treating the appellants there might be somewhat less than enough of the *suaviter in modo*. But when Gallio allowed the Greeks, without interference, and with impunity, to employ personal violence by beating "the chief ruler of the Jewish synagogue" before his very tribunal, he was wrong. Even on the most lenient supposition that has been made on his behalf,—namely, that Sosthenes having shown himself a "frivolous and vexatious plaintiff," he was willing to let him suffer a little of the consequences, by winking at the tumultuary proceeding, —he went too far. Such an assault was an outrage on all law, and a very mischievous precedent. While he dismissed the cause, he ought to have protected plaintiff and defendant alike from assault and injury. We are satisfied, however, that the harm he would have done by entertaining the appeal of the insurrectionary Jews against Paul, would, by the exemplification of a false and dangerous principle, have been incomparably greater, than any that could arise from his suffering a troublesome prosecutor to get a little salutary correction,—even although somewhat at the expense of regular order; and that it would be well,—well for Britain and for Europe,—if, instead of branding Gallio as the very archetype of irreligious and profligate judges, his example, in the former part of his procedure, were recommended to the imitation of magistrates, supreme and subordinate, in every country of Christendom, even in this nineteenth century of the christian era.

# LECTURE V.

OBJECTS OF THE VOLUNTARIES, AND MEANS BY WHICH THEY SEEK THEIR ATTAINMENT.

On the subject of this lecture, many extravagant absurdities have been uttered and printed. We have no wish to violate the charity that "thinketh no evil;" yet we must either, on the one hand, impute an amount of ignorance and folly greater than can well be supposed to exist in some of the quarters from which these absurdities have proceeded,—or, on the other, the heavier charge, because a moral one, of misrepresentation. We have been represented as the sworn enemies of the church, seeking, *per fas aut nefas*, its destruction, the demolition of its sanctuaries, the impoverishing of its ministers, the dividing and scattering of its people; and all this too, it has at times been insinuated, from the pitiful and selfish principle of eagerness for sectarian aggrandizement. It had been little, if such imputations had come only from the underlings of the church,—from the lips and the pens of some weak and empty declaimers, more desirous to vituperate an adversary than to ascertain and circulate truth. But it has, by no means, been to such alone that we have been indebted for our

heavy indictment. And at the end of a list of names which might be adduced in substantiation of this, now must be placed, with sincere regret, not for our sakes, but for his own, the highest of them all,—a name from whose merited eminence we are so far from being desirous to detract, that we are sincerely and deeply grieved when the owner of it himself does any thing to affect its true dignity. Dr. C. dilates at length, and with a seductive eloquence, on the difference, in spirit, and purpose, and procedure, between the reformers of past days and those of our own; and to the latter he applies no very measured terms of contumely and reprobation. We are sorry that such a man should have given way to emotions, even of temporary vehemence, of a nature to prompt the utterance and the authorship of such reviling; and should thus have given a sanction so high, and encouragement so little needed, to the propensities of less noble minds. We desire the grace of God to keep us from " rendering railing for railing."

Of a number of successive pages the sum and substance is—that the old reformers had the sound discretion to *keep the machinery*, and only to *change the working of it*, placing it in other and better hands, to be wrought upon new principles; — whereas the modern reformers — " the headlong innovators of the present day,"—labour with all their might to destroy the framework itself. The groundlessness (to use the softest possible term) of the representations given by him of the intentions, wishes, and efforts of these innovators,—representations fitted to serve no other end than that of

inflaming the public mind against them,—we may see immediately. But supposing him simply to mean, that the old reformers thought good to retain the machinery of an Establishment, while the modern reformers aim at its removal;—it is very obvious, that the question between them resolves itself into a previous one—namely, *whether the machinery be good.* If it was *not* good, then were the old reformers wrong in its retention,—and the present reformers *right* in seeking its removal, and the substitution of a better. But by Dr. C. the goodness of the machinery is assumed; and on its gratuitous assumption the whole of his merciless and contumelious philippic is founded.—When he says of John Knox—"he did not destroy a good machine because of the bad working of it,"—he makes the *petitio principii* which pervades and vitiates the whole. How writes he?—"We cannot but remark the total difference "between the two reformations." "If the one were "a doctrinal or moral, the other perhaps may be "termed a mechanical,—or, as the sure effect were "not to mend but to demolish altogether the "frame-work of the Establishment, it may best "of all be styled a machine-breaking reformation; "and of course its advocates, or rather its instigators and its agents, are the machine-breaking "reformers of the present day—far more mischievous in their higher walk, but hardly more intelligent, we do think, be they in or out of "parliament, than the machine-breakers of Kent, "the frame-breakers of Leicestershire, or the incendiaries a few years back, in the southern and

"midland counties of England."* Calmly, but firmly, we turn on this not over-courteous assailant. We tell him, at once and distinctly, that the charge which he thus prefers against *us* has its application elsewhere. We plead *Not guilty;* and we throw back the charge, only stript of its terms of contumely, upon our accuser, and all the advocates of Establishments. The guilt is theirs, not ours. Dr. C. finds the machinery of an Establishment in existence:—he thinks it good:—he extols the ancient worthies of the reformation for keeping it up;—and those who would now set it aside he represents as the victims of a "phrenzied delusion." But this is all assumption. The question recurs—Was the machinery of an Establishment the *original machinery* for the working out of the great ends of the world's instruction and salvation? Dr. C. goes back to the Reformation:—we go back a little beyond him. Dr. C. contemplates what the reformers found existing in their days:—we contemplate what we find to have existed in the older days of the Apostles. If the machinery of an Establishment can be shown to have the sanction of divine description and the authority of divine institution, in the Apostolic records,—if a model, or any thing like a model of it can be discovered there,—we shall admit the justness of the severest invectives,—and, whilst we cannot commend the asperity and the coarseness with which they are administered, we shall bow to the merited rebuke. But instead of making any such admissions, we

* Pages 22, 23.

cancel our names from the impeachment, and insert those of our opponents. Who, we ask, are the guilty machine-breakers? Are not they who, with unhallowed hands, presumed to demolish the frame-work of divine contrivance and divine construction, and to substitute one of human contrivance and human construction in its room?—they, who have taken to pieces, and thrown aside as useless lumber, the machine which inspired workmen were employed, under divine superintendence, to put together, in the beginning of the Gospel—"according to the pattern showed to them in the mount,"—and have presumed to imagine, that one of their own may work better, and produce both a superior article, and a more abundant supply of it? And why are we to be branded as "frame-breaking reformers,"—as "impetuous and bustling agitators, in whose breasts politics have engrossed the place of piety,"—and as "headlong innovators," "resolved at all hazards upon change?"—why are we to be treated with a violence and vituperation so unseemly, and so especially unseemly in one who ought to be an "ensample" of christian meekness to the rising ministry,—when our object,—our sole object is,—to set aside a frame-work which we believe, and which our opponents themselves admit, to be of human invention; and to bring again into re-organized and universal operation that which is divine?—to displace the machinery of Constantine, and have recourse to that of the Apostles,—in the faith that the latter was not a structure to be improved upon and superseded by the experience of

successive centuries,—but, like every other work of God, perfect as it came from Him, and deteriorated by every presumptuous touch of the meddling hand of man? Here lies "the height and front of our offending." I ask, then,—and with all confidence,—*Is it* offending? With whom lies the presumption—with whom the delusion—with whom the crime? A crime we do regard it, and a crime of no inferior enormity,—to substitute what is human for what is divine; but our consciences have yet to receive the illumination that shall convince them of the crime,—and make them sensible of the compunction which the commission of it should engender,—of doing what lies in our power to *re-substitute the divine for the human.*

This, in one word, is our grand aim. I speak not in reference to the details of the New-Testament constitution of the christian church. Respecting these, there are diversities of opinion, both among the advocates and the opponents of Establishments. I speak not of the comparative claims to scripture sanction of Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, or Independency. I speak simply of the voluntary support and propagation of the gospel, and of the promotion generally of the interests of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, by the subjects of that kingdom themselves, in opposition to the principle of state-support, and of the alliance, for the sake of such support, of that kingdom with the kingdoms of this world,—of the church with earthly governments. This is the point on which the Voluntaries are one. We avow our desire to bring back the

church, in this respect, to the New-Testament model. Finding the Voluntary Principle the great constitutional principle of the apostolic church, as it appears in the inspired records,—and finding not the remotest hint of any sanctioned change at any future period,—our conscientious desire is to see the church of God re-settled on its original basis, —restored to its primitive independence. We wish what is human removed, that all that is divine in her may thrive. We wish her to stand alone, in her pristine purity, dignity, and strength,—counselled by her Lord's wisdom, protected by her Lord's power, supplied by her Lord's bounty, relying on her Lord's faithfulness, and, under the banner of his cross, with the sword of the Spirit, and the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation, advancing, in the joy of hope, "from strength to strength," "conquering and to conquer."—Is there any thing formidable or frightful in such an intention or such an aim? Is there any thing to be dreaded in the restitution of what is divine? The man who is afraid of this, has surely some reason to suspect the soundness of his grounds. No man who has "faith in God," will be apprehensive of danger or of injury from any principle or any precept that has the sanction of his authority. The nearer we can come, in the constitution of our own minds, to conformity with the word of God, the greater will be our personal prosperity; and the nearer we can bring the constitution of the church into conformity with that word, the greater will be the church's prosperity. We only want to "purge

out the old leaven,"—the leaven of the world,—"that she may be a new lump."

But we cannot allow to pass without notice the heavy charge brought against us by Dr. C., when, adopting for his purpose the terms of ancient inspiration, he thus writes: —"The days were when a "man was famous according as he had lifted up axes "upon the thick trees—or according as he gave of "materials or money for the building and the "endowment of churches. But now, they would "break down the carved work thereof at once "with axes and hammers. They have said in their "hearts, Let us destroy them together. They would "burn up all the synagogues of God in the land."*—Would they indeed? If there are any who would, Dr. C. knows, or ought to know, that they are persons with whom true Voluntaries own no brotherhood:—that true Voluntaries disown and reprobate every sentiment, every feeling, every desire, every action of the kind. No, no, the sword is not *our* weapon; axes and hammers are not our instruments. We leave these in the hands of the abettors of religious coercion,—by whom they have often enough been wielded to purpose. There was a soldier in the army of Titus, who, in despite of the order of his general, dashed the blazing brand into the Temple of Jerusalem. That temple was foredoomed to destruction; and no order of any general on earth could save it. But in the present case, there is no such prediction,—no such preordination. That every anti-spiritual, and consequently anti-

* Page 27.

christian *system* indeed is foredoomed to fall, in order to the full triumph of the Redeemer's reign, I cannot but, with my Bible before me, believe. But stone and timber are not ingredients of the system; nor to the fall of the system is there need for the dislodging of a single stone or a single rafter: —and if one soldier in the ranks of the Voluntaries can be pointed out, who will avow the purpose or the wish to imitate the reckless Roman, it shall not be my fault if he is not turned from those ranks with disgrace; and an appropriate brand affixed to him. Our consciences sit very easy under such imputations,—witnessing as they do to their utter groundlessness;—and, did they come from any of the herd of second-rate declaimers, whose aim is to rouse public prejudice, rather than to enlighten the public judgment, and whose words, like the wind, pass away and are forgotten, we should not have thought it worth while to dwell upon them for a moment, in the way of denial and refutation. But when they come from a man of eminence so elevated, and of influence so extensive, whose name is known through Europe, and will give his representations weight on the farther side of the Atlantic; then, although their nature is unaltered by the lips through which they pass, or the hand that commits them to paper,—yet, as the extent of their currency, and the amount of credit attached to them, will be proportioned to the respectability and celebrity of the name that stands for their voucher,—we cannot treat them with a silent scorn. If any shall deem it presumption to use terms of complaint and condemnation so strong

respecting such a man, as those I am now employing—my answer is, that it is simply *his being such a man* that justifies their strength. The presumption would be, to treat charges from *him* with lightness. Who can but complain,—and complain strongly and indignantly,—when a man, whose voice is borne on the four winds of heaven, represents us, after using some of the contumelious designations already quoted, as "prepared to welcome, with shouts of exultation, the overthrow of those altars, which in holier and better times upheld the faith and devotion of our forefathers?"*—"Say not of the former times they were better than these"—is the counsel of Solomon—"for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this." I mean not to compare the one with the other now; but only to say, that what to some eyes casts the shadow of death over the present times, may to others shed upon them the very light of life. We live in *good* times,—auspicious, promising times,—times pregnant with mighty, and I trust happy results;—and could I but anticipate with certainty, as near at hand, the severing of the anti-christian bond that unites the church and state in their unholy and pernicious alliance,—that were an event which without doubt I *should* be prepared to welcome with a shout of exultation, as loud and joyous as my voice could utter. But why? Would it be the shout of infidel joy at the prostration of religion, and the sweeping away of all the vestiges of national piety? No. It would be the shout of triumph in the church's freedom,—in

* Page 29.

the purification of her altars from the unhallowed and desecrating touch of the world,—in the renovation of her worship,—in the resuscitation of her primitive energies,—and in the surest presages of her extension and her triumphs. I believe that the hour which should sever the altar from the throne, would be the hour of increasing stability to both. While Mr. Gladstone trembles for the state, and others tremble for the church, I regard every omen of their approaching separation as the happiest augury alike for the one and for the other. I believe that the hour in which the church should cease to be the *church of the nation* would be the hour of most auspicious promise for the *religion of the nation*;—the best and most desirable description of national religion being, not the external forms of a nation's observance, but the large aggregate of personal and domestic godliness:—and of these I should augur well, when the church, returning to her first love, should frame her altars for herself, and supply her own sacrifices; when, effacing from all the symbols of her worship "the image and superscription of Cæsar," and retaining only those of the King of Zion, she should make his name the rallying word of all her disunited energies, and concentrate them, with one consentaneous impulse of primitive love and zeal, on the diffusion of truth, the suppression of sin, the conversion of sinners, and the subjugation of the world to the Cross. Are the altars of an Establishment the only altars by which faith and devotion may be upheld? Must the sign of the crown as well as of

the cross be emblazoned on them, in order to the acceptance and the salutary virtue of their services? —There was an altar of old, which was fashioned of divinely prescribed materials, and according to a divinely dictated pattern, and for a divinely instituted worship. Was it heresy to seek the overthrow of altars which were constructed of other materials, after other models, and for other forms and other objects of worship? Was it heresy in Elijah, to "build again the altar of Jehovah which had been thrown down?"—This is what we wish to do. We presume to think, that the worship of the church of God will be more acceptably presented on an altar after the apostolic model, than on one after the model devised by Constantine,—and that on that altar every sacrifice that is presented must be a "free-will offering,"—the offering of a willing mind and a devoted heart, entirely liberated from all constraint and all exaction.—The insinuation, or more than insinuation, is, that in our zeal for the overthrow of the altars, we are indifferent about the faith and the devotion;—whereas it is under the full conviction that by the changes we seek the faith and the devotion will flourish more purely and more abundantly than ever, that we pursue our course,—a conviction founded on the simple but sure ground, that whatever is divinely authorized will be divinely efficient.—For the same reasom we disown the imputation of being mere *externalists*, — careful of forms, while we are regardless of principles:—"It "is a question," alleges Dr. C., "not of theology or "of morals, but of machinery; and many are the

" economical and arithmetical reformers of our age, " who feel themselves abundantly qualified for the " entertainment of it."—" Their war is not against " any system of theology, for about this they are " mainly indifferent, as if all systems were alike " in their eyes; but their war is against the machi- " nery set up in other days, and preserved to our " own times for the circulation of its lessons."—Does Dr. C. really believe, that in avowing our hostility to Establishments, we are so reckless of principle as that "all systems are alike in our eyes?" If he *does*—we can only say, "With us it is a light thing to be judged of him or of man's judgment; he that judgeth us is the Lord:"—"Our witness is in heaven, our record on high." If he *does not*, he should not have said it; and if he believes it of some, and not of others, he should not have said it thus unqualifiedly. But it is a vast mistake to affirm that our controversy involves no *important principles*. The principles relative to the spiritual character of the kingdom of Christ we consider as holding a place second only to the essential doctrines of salvation themselves,—in close affinity with them,—and bearing most directly and necessarily on their effectual maintenance, exhibition, and advancement.*

* It is refreshing to turn from representations so harsh and uncharitable as those which we have been noticing, to the language of a man who, to the faithfulness of a devoted minister of Christ, and the elegance of a classically-accomplished and richly-furnished mind, unites all the loveliness of christian charity, and all the courtesy of gentlemanly candour:—"We should never," says the Rev. Baptist Wriothesly Noel, "we should never impute

It would be irksome and annoying, were it worth our while to allow ourselves to be fretted by it, to hear incessantly reiterated the charge of aiming at the *destruction of the church*. Many a time has this been contradicted; and the palpable fallacy on which it proceeds, exposed. But the disavowal is vain. The charge is too convenient—too plausible to the undiscriminating, who are always the large majority on such subjects,—and thus too well calculated to excite, and to maintain alarm, a kind of devout consternation in the public mind,—to be discontinued. We can only, in reply, reiterate our denial. It is *not* the church's *destruction* we seek: —it is the church's deliverance, and restoration, and prosperity. We will not assent to the degrading proposition, that the existence or the security of the church is at all dependent on its connexion with any political power,—that its being is wrapped up in the same destiny with that of any secular government on the face of the earth. We hold the church in too high honour to admit a sentiment so much to her shame. We have too firm a faith in the word of Him who has founded it upon a rock,—and on

to our christian brethren corrupt motives, when they are not apparent. A pious dissenter wishes to see the connexion between the church and state dissolved. What right have we to say, that this wish arises from envy or from cupidity? He is in other respects a consistent believer. It is, therefore, much more likely that he wishes to destroy that connexion, because he believes it to interfere with the progress of religion, and to lead to jealousies among the different bodies of professed Christians. Under such circumstances, to impute to him the baser and less probable motive, is uncharitable and unchristian."—*Unity of the Church*, p. 21.

that rock has graven, "as with an iron pen and lead for ever"—"THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT." We regard her secular connexions as, of all hinderances, the most retarding to her spiritual advancement. We wish her to "lay aside every weight,"—the weight of her encumbering worldliness and her political entanglements,—"and the sin that most easily besets her"—the sin of unbelieving distrust of the power, and grace, and faithfulness of her exalted Lord—that she may "run the race set before her" with greater closeness to the line of her legitimate course, and with greater swiftness towards the goal of her ultimate triumph, and the "prize of her high calling."

Is it necessary for us to repeat, for the hundredth time, that the *establishment of the church* is not *the church itself?* There are minds, we are well aware, and the number of them is not small, in which the association of the two has become so powerful, and so habitual, that they cannot form to themselves the conception of the establishment ceasing, without the church going down. And this is one of the very evils which the establishment of religion has engendered,—the jumbling and confounding of the public mind. But that mind is advancing in illumination. And we are happy to have the aid of dignitaries of the churches on both sides of the Tweed in spreading this illumination. Their zeal for the honour of the church,—when they have anticipated the possibility of her worldly support being withdrawn,—has elicited from them sentiments worthy of themselves. We have formerly seen with

what jealous earnestness Dr. Chalmers—whom I have called a *dignitary* of the Scottish church, both as holding the metropolitan chair of theology, and as, on various grounds of personal eminence, a *primus inter pares*—with what jealous earnestness he affirms the "*nec tamen consumebatur*" of his own Establishment. "There is not one thing," we have heard him saying, "which the state can do to our "independent and indestructible church, but strip "her of her temporalities; she would remain a church "notwithstanding—as strong as ever in the props of "her own moral and inherent greatness; and, though "shrivelled in all her dimensions by the moral injury "inflicted on many thousands of families, she would "be at least as strong as ever in the reverence of her "country's population." And with a sensitive and seemly warmth, he dwells, with his own eloquence, on the imperishable vitality of the spiritual community, whatever become of its union with the secular, and the support it has thence derived. *Our* faith is only a little stronger than the Doctor's; for we believe that when thus severed and bereaved, instead of being "shrivelled in all her dimensions," her spiritual strength — the only true strength of a spiritual community — will be renewed; and her spiritual extension—the only true extension of such a community—indefinitely enlarged.

Let us now hear for a moment, a dignitary of the Southern Establishment—the Bishop of Lincoln, in replying to the Earl of Roden, in the House of Lords, in the debate on the Bill for the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts. Lord Roden had "expressed

his regret that more care seemed to be taken of the temporalities of the church than of its religion." "The facts and arguments," says the right reverend prelate in reply, "advanced by the noble Earl, could only have arisen from a mistake of the nature of the proposition before the House, or from a confusion of two things perfectly distinct in their existence,—namely, the temporalities of the church and its spiritual character. I will tell your Lordships, that these two things are not connected together, and that one of these may be destroyed without the principle of the other being affected. The church may be separated from the state—its ministers may be ejected from their benefices—its revenues may be transferred to the support of other denominations, or diverted to secular purposes—but still it will continue to exist as a religious community; its believers will meet, like the primitive churches of Christianity, for the purpose of performing the act of worship according to its creed; and they will perform it in a decent form, and with great scrupulousness as to its rites, although they may be deprived of their places of worship. It may be stripped of its worldly wealth; but it will remain rich in spiritual blessings."—Agreed again. Richer —far richer—than ever. And which of the two descriptions of riches is the most desirable,—though not always, alas! the most desired,—in any community calling itself the church of Christ, may be left with any class of men, christian or worldly, to decide.

Thus, *ex cathedrâ*, both prelatic and presbyterian,

we have comfortable assurance given us, that we are doing nothing that can endanger the existence, or affect the real spiritual prosperity, of either of the churches. And we shall hereafter find a highly respectable layman, Mr. Gladstone, affixing his Amen to these assurances. Our conviction is, that the day of their separation from the state would be the day of their commencing spiritual revival; the turn not of the flood tide to the ebb, but of the ebb to the flood. We repeat, then, that we are not seeking the overthrow of the church, but its confirmation—not its injury, but its benefit. We are seeking the removal of its establishment (falsely so called) by man, in order to its true and effectual establishment by God.

Our hostility is not against *men*, but against systems; and our hostility against systems, being the product of conviction founded in the word of God, is resolute and uncompromising. A compromise of important principle we regard as the very spirit of insubordination to our Master, and a presumptuous superseding of his supremacy. While these convictions, therefore, remain, our voice must continue to be lifted up for this great consummation; and by every legitimate means in our power, we must persevere in seeking its attainment. What, then, *are* legitimate means? Here too we have been mercilessly assailed. First of all, we have been lampooned and vilified, as the allies of infidels, and papists, and radicals, and revolutionists. No charge has been more frequently repeated; and no charge can well be more ill-judged and invi-

dious. It has, as might have been foreseen, been retorted; and by this means, comparisons of personal and party character have been distressingly and most injuriously bandied from side to side. But we may well ask—*cui bono?*—what relation has this to principle or to argument? Our friends of the Established Church would place us in a very hard predicament,—precluding us from acting on our most solemn convictions in regard to one aspect of a case, because it happens, from its very nature, to have another aspect, by which the interest is awakened of a different description of men;—precluding us from doing, on religious grounds, what we conscientiously believe to be essential to the benefit of the church, because there are men of no religion, who, on political grounds, act for what they conscientiously, or professedly, believe to be the benefit of the state. The very subject of the controversy—the union of CHURCH and STATE—necessarily renders it a *state* question as well as a *church* question, and draws into the discussion and prosecution of it political partisans, as well as christian advocates. If amongst these political partisans there are, unhappily, not a few who have not the religion which, for their own sakes, we wish them to have,—is it to be forgotten, that the church has irreligious supporters as well as irreligious opponents? Would God it were otherwise; and that the combatants, on both sides, were all under the common influence of true godliness! But it would indeed be hard, that *we* should be prevented from doing what we deem a *religious*

duty, because *others*, whatever their character, do what they deem a *political* duty. Or even,—let me put the very strongest case,—suppose a number of the politicians who take part in the conflict, are not merely indifferent about the interests of religion—suppose them to be actuated by the expectation that the destruction of the Establishment will prove a death-blow to religion itself, and will serve to diffuse the principles of infidelity and atheism through the land;—yet if we, instructed from the divine word, and having learned out of it a lesson widely different, are, in our consciences, convinced that religion has suffered more from its connexion with the state than from any other external influence whatsoever, and that the separation of it from that connexion is necessary to the restoration of its primitive energy, and to the increase, if not of nominal, of real vital Christianity, in the country,—are we, in that case, to refrain from acting on our convictions, because atheists and infidels aim at the same events, in the anticipation of a different result? No verily. We will believe our Bibles rather than them,—and proceed fearlessly, on the principle that conformity to its directions must ever prove the most efficient means of promoting the religion it reveals.—There was a period in the memorable struggle for the abolition of the African slave-trade, when the noble band of philanthropists by whom it was conducted were not a little embarrassed and impeded in their efforts, and their progress towards a successful issue interrupted and retarded, by the circumstance that the abettors

of the fraternizing and levelling principles of revolutionary France avowed themselves, as might naturally enough have been anticipated, the friends of abolition. The circumstance, as might no less naturally have been anticipated, was eagerly laid hold of by the enemies of abolition, to prejudice and frighten the public mind; and some even of the staunch friends of the good cause did catch the panic, and timidly counselled a suspension of active measures for the time. "The name of Jacobin, and the charge of holding revolutionary tenets," say the biographers of Mr. Wilberforce, "might be easily affixed to any advocate of liberty; whilst, however wantonly imputed, they could not, in those times of wakeful suspicion, be easily removed. It was, moreover, inevitable, that amongst the friends of abolition should be ranged some actual abettors of those extreme principles." It certainly did not follow, however, that because levellers were friends of abolition, friends of abolition were levellers. So, neither does it follow, that, because political infidels, or even atheists (if such there be) are friends to the establishment abolition, the friends of such abolition are either atheists or infidels, or disposed, on account of such coincidence, to regard with an indulgent tolerance the principles of infidelity or atheism. There were some, on the occasion referred to, who voted against the abolitionists, for fear of encouraging the disciples of Paine. This was weakness, however pardonable on account of the motive. We prefer the example of the parliamentary general in that warfare of humanity against oppression, who, how

much soever he regretted the association, and although himself, on account of his zeal in the cause of the oppressed and wronged, actually invested with what he calls "the dubious honour of French citizenship," did *not* feel it his duty to yield to any timid and compromising counsels, but, as far as circumstances at all admitted, to *go forward*. "It is certainly true," he says, "and perfectly natural, that these jacobins are all friendly to the abolition; and it is no less true and natural that this operates to the injury of our cause. However, I am not discouraged," &c.—Nor are we. We have the same confidence in our cause, as the cause of piety and benevolence,—of "glory to God, peace on earth, and good will to men,"—as that great and good man had in his;—and how unkindly soever we may be classed, even by our brethren, with those whose principles we disown, we cannot in conscience desist from its humble, steadfast, unrelaxing prosecution.

"*Political dissenters*" is a favourite designation of reproach, for us; and Dr. C., we have seen, represents us as "impetuous and bustling agitators, in whose breasts politics have engrossed the place of piety." Strongly feeling, as we do, however, the undesirableness of ministers of Jesus making themselves very conspicuous on the gymnastic arena of party politics, so as in any degree to interfere with and injure their spiritual usefulness, and mar the great end of their life and ministry; we must, at the same time, withhold even our seeming sanction from the position that politics and piety are incompatible. Politics, largely considered, embrace the

great interests of civil and religious liberty, and consequently of the social happiness of mankind,—indifference to which would argue neither patriotism nor general benevolence. I confess myself, however, very averse to the mixing up of the present question with the contentions of political partisanship. I would much rather that the names of Whig, and Tory, and Radical, were kept entirely out of it, and that so far as *Christians* are concerned, the agitation of it were maintained on the high ground of Bible authority and Bible obligation. But still, we are citizens, as well as Christians; and the question is one which, from its nature, requires our acting in both capacities. On this subject, I may be excused for introducing here the sentiments of an address delivered in this metropolis in the spring of last year, when I had not the remotest anticipation of my present engagement:—

"There are two classes of means in our power. The one pertains to us, as subjects of the kingdom of Christ;—the other pertains to us, as subjects of the British government. The former consists of all the methods accessible to us, for the diffusion of the knowledge of our principles. Respecting this description of means, there can exist no hesitation. The diffusion of what we believe to be divine truth, is far more than warrantable; it is imperative. Our motto should be—ENLIGHTEN—ENLIGHTEN—ENLIGHTEN. I like this motto better, as having more in it at least of an evangelically peaceful sound, than the ordinary one of Agitate—Agitate—Agitate. Yet to agitate, means no more, after all, than to rouse by

public discussion; to produce excitement by information and adequate impression. And enlightening would be of little value, if there were no excitement, no interest, no practical movements, as its result. In private and in public,—by the pulpit, by the platform, and by the press,—it is incumbent upon us to give currency and efficiency, as wide as attainable, to divine principles and divine precepts.

"But, with regard to the other description of means, doubts have by some been entertained of the propriety of Christians, in such a cause, having recourse to them at all. I have had such doubts pressed seriously upon myself. These means, it has been alleged, are political. Be it so. I answer: First, are not our political relations, as well as any others, relations in which we are placed by Providence? Are they not relations with which, in this free country, Providence has associated the enjoyment of certain rights and privileges? Nay more, are they not relations with which the word of God itself has connected certain duties? We do not, when we become Christians, cease to be citizens. Our subjection to the sceptre of the King of Zion, does not cancel our franchise as subjects of the king of Britain. Nay, if we neglect our duties in the latter relation, we neglect a part of our duties in the former; our obligations as citizens forming a distinct class of our obligations as Christians. If we fail to use any privilege, or to assert any right belonging to us as subjects of the British throne, when, by the legitimate use or assertion of it, we have it in our power to effect any end connected

with the glory of God or the good of men; we fail in our allegiance to the 'King of kings.' Was it, I ask you, on religious or political grounds, that the great Apostle of the Gentiles so repeatedly appealed to his rights, as a free-born denizen of Rome? When he said,—'Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?'—when he said,—'They have beaten us openly, uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily, but let them come themselves and fetch us out;'—when he said—'I stand at Cæsar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged; to the Jews I have done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die; but if there be none of those things whereof they accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Cæsar;'*—was it the Roman, or was it the Christian, that spoke? I answer, it was both. It was Paul in both capacities. He pleaded his rights as a Roman, that he might benefit his cause as a Christian. Let us follow the example; asserting our civil rights, and using our civil privileges,—not on personal grounds alone, (though even on these the conduct is perfectly justifiable,) but on grounds of christian piety and benevolence,—of regard to the glory of God, the prosperity of the church, and the benefit of the world.—I answer, secondly:—In the anti-scriptural and unholy alliance between the church and the state, the state is a

* Acts xxii. 25; xvi. 37; xxv. 10, 11.

party, as well as the church. The disruption of the union must take place in one or other of three ways:—by the church throwing off the state,—by the state throwing off the church,—or by the mutual consent, whether spontaneous or constrained, of both the parties. Now I hold, that, in the two-fold character of Christians and citizens, it is not only lawful, it is incumbent, that we use our influence with *both*. To our fellow-christians in the church, we address ourselves in the way of appeal to the principles of our common standard of truth,—to the name and the honour of our common Master,—and to the best interests of his cause and kingdom. But this is only the half, though it may be the more important half, of our duty. As citizens, we have access,—legitimate access,—to the parliament, and to the throne. If, then, there be any obstacle lying in the way of the attainment of our great end, to the removal of which the authority of the British legislature is competent, and, according to the present constitution of things, necessary; and if, in the fair exercise of our rights as British subjects, whether by direct appeal on the principles of impartial and righteous administration, or through the more gradual but ultimately mighty and infallible operation of public opinion, we have it in our power to contribute to the desired result;—the question is—have we done our duty, either to our country, or to the church of God, if we have left this influence unemployed? I answer, *No*. The use of it is equally binding on us, as patriots and as Christians. —If it be alleged, (as I know it has been,) that

we act inconsistently with our own principles, in applying to the civil legislature in religious matters, —our reply is at hand. We apply to government, not with a petition to *legislate*, but with a petition to *cease to legislate*. The prayer of our petition is, neither for the enactment of new laws, nor for the amendment of old ones, but for the repeal of the whole, as destitute of all legitimate authority. We pray our rulers simply to leave the church to its own laws, or rather, to the laws of its only Head, —that they may be administered within itself, according to its pristine independence. We pray them, by this means, to rid the country at once of all its politico-religious animosities, and, confining themselves to their own appropriate department, to administer its functions with even-handed equity. In making such application, we acknowledge no rightful power, either royal or parliamentary, to interfere with the affairs of the church. We petition for the abandonment of the power, as a power that is *not* rightful. It is no fault of ours, that the church has been allied with the state. We disown the unhallowed coalition. But it exists: and forming, as we do, a part of the church, and a part of the state, the interests of both are ours; and, for the sake of both, the obligation lies upon us, to seek, by every means in our power, to accomplish their disunion. Our duty as citizens, I repeat, is a part of our duty as Christians."*

"But Establishments," we are reminded by some,

* Importance of the Church Controversy, and the Spirit in which it ought to be conducted, &c.

who would fain have a character for moderation, without much regard to consistency,—who are with us in principle, but cannot go along with us in action,—"*Establishments exist.* If they did not, we should decidedly oppose their introduction. But there is a wide difference between introducing what does not exist, and putting down what does."—Granted. There is the same difference with that which exists between preventing a distemper from seizing our bodies, and getting rid of it when it has unhappily obtained possession. But it is a style of reasoning which, in *such* a case, we are not very likely to hear adopted by these counsellors of moderation, and lovers of "things as they are." We hardly expect to hear them say, when invaded by the attack of a severe illness,—"We would not willingly admit this disease, were we now free of it; but, seeing it has actually found its way into our frame,—had not we as well be content to keep it?" We regard the system of church and state connexion as a distemper, affecting alike the political and the ecclesiastical body;—an irregular and unnatural action of the vital organs of both, which has, by long neglect, been allowed to acquire too much of a chronic character;—and we cannot but regard it as being quite as imperative a duty to use the necessary means for its removal, as it would be to use those of prevention on the supposition of its absence. We are at a loss, indeed, to imagine, how any man, pretending to think at all, should satisfy his conscience with a principle so *un*principled:—and yet some men *have* satisfied themselves with it,

who do think, and on other subjects think independently, and think well. How can they lay their consciences to sleep, in somnolent quiescence, on a pillow like this? "If our West India colonies"—might a planter, or a kind advocate of the planters, have said, previously to the blessed emancipation of the negro—"If our West India colonies were now to be brought into cultivation, I certainly should object to its being done by the introduction of a system of slavery; but seeing slavery *has been* introduced, and has long been in operation, as the regularly organized system of those islands, why should we interfere with it?—better let it alone!" There is one great convenience, indeed, in such a principle. What a deal of trouble it saves!—What an immense expenditure of brain in unprofitable controversy! According to it, we have nothing to do with the inquiry, What is *right?* but simply with the inquiry, What *is?* Or, should we, as a matter of curious speculation, institute an inquiry, in regard to any thing that *is*, whether it *ought to be*,—we are, at any rate, spared all the trouble of action, in the way of inventing and applying means for its rectification or removal, if, on investigation, it be found wrong;—for *it is*—and that is enough. O the relief, to timid and indolent minds, of "*things as they are!*"

But this torpid apathy will not do. It is unworthy of any subject of Christ's kingdom. It is treason, or at least misprision of treason, to the King of Zion. Had the principle on which we have been animadverting always operated, Europe would, to

this hour, have been slumbering on in all the dreary darkness and spiritual bondage of the middle ages. The reformers would have said—It is a pity so flagrant a departure should have taken place from the original simplicity, and purity, and independence of the church of Christ, and that a system so incongruous, and a domination so monstrous, as the papal, should have risen into being! We cannot but deeply regret it; had we lived earlier, we should have opposed its commencement; but here it is; and here are we, in the providence of God, under it;—let it stand!

The implied comparison may seem severe. But severe or not, the *principle* that would now allow the establishment of the protestant church to remain, although admitted to be evil, simply because it *is*, is the same that, with a little wider stretch of application, would have conferred permanence upon popery. That which was,—if not the very germ, at any rate the nurturing hot-bed, and the consummation of popery, exists in every Establishment —the union of the secular and the sacred. From this popery originated; and by this it advanced to its proudest elevation; and the destruction of this union will be the most effectual preventive of its ever again rising to the ascendant. And if we are to judge at all by consequences, we cannot look to the historical fact of the low ebb to which Christianity was reduced by the prevalence of that "mystery of iniquity," which, but for the previous union of church and state could never have had a being, —without regarding the introduction of this union as

the master-piece of satanic policy.* From the effects of this anomalous and antichristian principle, the church, to an extent for which there is every reason for thankfulness, was delivered by the reformation. But, considering the long-rivetted habits of men's minds, and the mere glimmerings of truth which were then possessed on the great subjects of religious liberty, and the rights of conscience and of private judgment, it was not to be expected that the reformation should at once be complete. And the observation has special force of application to our own country when the circumstances are recollected in which the transition from popery to protestantism originally took place,—not by the voice of an indignant people,

* "I am aware that, by not a few of the friends of Establishments, the deed of Constantine the Great is regarded as one of the providential means employed for settling the stability of the church, by engaging on its side the powers of this world, which had, till that time, opposed it. They contemplate the event with devout thankfulness, as 'the Lord's doing, and wondrous in their eyes.' What I am now about to say, I say deliberately,—not as the utterance of controversial vehemence, but of calm and deep and settled conviction. I cannot but regard that event as having been the result of very different counsels from those of heaven. I consider the incorporation of the church with the state, as one, and not the least, amongst the many attempts of the 'gates of hell' to 'prevail against it,'—as one of the boldest, the craftiest, and the best concerted 'wiles' of the 'prince of this world,' for corrupting, dividing, weakening, and subverting it. I do not say, that the principle of such incorporation was the germ itself of that 'mystery of iniquity,' which even in the days of the Apostles had 'begun to work,'—but it was the commission of that germ to a propitious soil; of which the consequence was, the rapid growth to maturity of that strange anomalous system, that extraordinary compound of heaven and earth and hell, on which 'the man of sin' erected his throne, and held Europe for ages in the chains of an iron despotism; tram-

roused to resist iniquity, and to burst and spurn away from them the bonds of spiritual oppression, and roused to this by the general spread and prevalence of enlightening and awakening truth,—but by the caprice of an unprincipled tyrant, who had in him all a pope's ambition, and too powerful a love of prerogative not to retain to himself what he wrested from another; and whose spirit of haughty self-will, and sensitive jealousy of the rights of his crown, was inherited in its full force by his daughter, under whom, with a strong predilection for many of the rites of the old religion, protestantism received

pling on both its civil and its religious liberties; slaying God's witnesses; chasing the remnant of the faithful into the wilderness; extinguishing the lights of truth; and wrapping the nations in the portentous gloom of spiritual ignorance and death: and thus, in point of fact, the attempt came actually nearer to success than any other that Satan, before or since, ever made. The attempt was one of deep insight into human character, and a sagacious foresight of the natural operation of principles. It was on a grand scale. There was a magnificence of conception in it. It showed that with the malignity of the fiend there remained the intellect of the angel. If ever Satan 'transformed himself into an angel of light,' it was then. He had tried intimidation, and had failed. During the long seasons in which, by his emissaries, he had 'persecuted the church of God and wasted it,' it had been with that church as it was with God's people in Egypt, when 'the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and grew.' The blood of the martyrs proved the seed of the church! He alters his tactics. Having failed of effecting his end by violence, he tries the power of enticement. He brings the fascinations and attractions of the world into the pale of the church. As 'the prince of this world,' he knew well, that nothing could tend more effectually to the corruption and subversion of a kingdom which was not of this world, than bringing it into intimate alliance with those that were, and thus leaguing it more closely and contagiously with his own."—*Importance of the Church Controversy, &c.*

its final settlement. We cannot wonder that, in such circumstances, no small amount of popery should have been retained, and especially the fundamental principle of state-alliance, respecting whose validity doubts had not then begun to be entertained on the part of ecclesiastics, in whose minds the union had all the sacredness of faith, all the force of habit, and all the tenacity of self-interest; and far less could such doubts be expected to arise in the bosoms of those monarchs, who, having thrown off the yoke of spiritual domination from their own shoulders, became naturally enamoured of the power thus acquired to impose it upon their subjects. This principle, then, of church and state alliance, we avow it to be our object to eradicate, and, by eradicating it, to COMPLETE THE REFORMATION. Our adversaries may smile at the feebleness of the instruments, and their presumption in associating themselves with such a work. They may regard the avowal as worthy of a place amongst "great swelling words of vanity." But if we have the might of *truth* on our side, then have we on our side the might of GOD, the might of him whose "weakness is stronger than men:" and in that might we shall prevail. We aim at the re-establishment of his authority, by the restoration of his church to the principle of her original divine constitution; and in such an attempt we can, with all confidence, look up for his aid. We aim at justice between man and man, in the most sacred of all the departments of human relation; for the duty of every man to maintain his own religious principles, in his own

way, and by his own resources; and the right of every man to have full freedom in doing so, and full exemption from every interference with his conscience in the appropriation of his property. Our aim is, the establishment, in this department of practice, of the grand principle of social morals—"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." We hold this divine principle, as the instantaneous settler of a thousand controversies,—giving a righteous and salutary verdict on them, the moment it is applied. It settled the question of *slavery*, not in theory only, as a question of abstract principles, but actually, in the bosom of every man, woman, and child on the face of the earth; for, according to it, the only consistent slaveholder was the man, who, with his hand upon his heart, could say, "I should like to be a slave; I should like to be the absolute, the purchased, the transferable, the saleable property of another." And where is that anomaly of his species, that solitary being, who, bearing the name of man, is an exception to all that is human—where is he to be found? And the same principle ought to settle the present controversy. The only consistent churchman is the man that can lay his hand on his heart, and say, "I like to pay for the support of religious principles which my conscience disapproves, and for religious ordinances in which I have no participation, and which those who compel me to pay for, are as able to maintain for themselves as I am to provide for my own." And the man who can say this with truth, will be found, I should presume, as great a

rarity as the other. We plead for the abrogation of all religious monopolies, and chartered ecclesiastical corporations. Towards this, the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts was a most important and gratifying step, especially when connected with the measures of parliamentary and municipal reform. But justice demands more; the word of God demands more; the peace and prosperity of both the church and the state demand more. And *the more* that is wanted *is*, not an admission of dissenters to an equal participation in state support with the privileged sect that now enjoys it, and thus a multiplication of endowed churches:—no; I trust that, with the exception of a mere handful in the North, who still hold the principle of an Establishment, and only keep aloof from the existing one on account of real or supposed corruptions, there is not a dissenting body in the country,—no, nor a dissenting congregation, nor a dissenting minister,—that would not decidedly reject the offer of such a participation, were it made. I speak for Scotland. I regret that the *regium donum* should compel me to speak somewhat less unqualifiedly for England, and less so still for Ireland. Would there were no such blot allowed to remain upon the dissenting character! What is wanted is the withdrawment of all state-support whatever, and the leaving of religion and religious parties to themselves: leaving it as it was left by its divine Author, to its own inherent and expansive energies; to his almighty protection, and to the zeal of those who experience its saving power, and whom the faith of it inspires with its own essen-

tial spirit of love,—love to God, love to Christ, love to the truth, love to the church, love to mankind. And we are not without the pleasing confidence, that in our favoured land, advancing as it is in the understanding and the application of the true principles of freedom, the day is not far distant, when its entire population, delivered from all political exactions for professedly spiritual ends, will enjoy, in its fullest extent, the invaluable blessing of RELIGIOUS EQUALITY.

I am not unaware of the puzzling questions which may be put to us respecting *property*. But these it is not ours to settle. It is our province to determine *principle*. If we succeed in showing that the present constitution of things, in regard to the state of religion, is inconsistent with the revealed will of God,—inconsistent with the simplest dictates of equity, and the prescriptions of the "royal law" of reciprocal obligation between man and man, of "doing to others as we would have others do to us,"—and with the genuine principles of civil and religious liberty, and the peace and prosperity of both the civil and the ecclesiastical communities,—we have sufficiently "shown cause" why "judgment should pass" in favour of a change. Let the best means of introducing that change, with the least possible measure of personal and private loss and suffering, be the subject of grave and mature deliberation in the legislative counsels of our country; as on other occasions, when important alterations are proposed in the working of the great principles of the constitution. For ourselves—we would

"wrong no man," we would "defraud no man." We would be guilty of no spoliation, but the spoliation of the spoiler; and even on the spoiler we should not be rigid in our exactions. We should require no restitution for the past;—the arrears would be rather heavy:—but shall satisfy ourselves with the cessation for the time to come of that spoiler's spoliation of us. At the same time, we would not require even this cessation to be so immediate as to harm an individual among present incumbents; there should not, with our will, "a hair fall from the head of any one of them," nor should their personal or their domestic comforts be diminished by a single ingredient. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal. We will have no Rathcormac bayonets—no Caermarthen or Calton-hill jails. As we have no wish to participate, neither have we any wish to retaliate. We have no resentments to gratify, no damages to sue for. Our only desire is, the adoption of a measure fraught with an immensity of future benefit both to the state and to the church; and the adoption of it in the least offensive and least injurious manner possible. The principles laid down by Mr. Hallam, respecting the essential distinction between "private and corporate property," appear to be founded in reason and equity. After remarking, that even claims founded on "the law of hereditary succession, as ancient and universal as that of property itself," are "set aside by the laws of forfeiture which have almost every where prevailed," he proceeds thus:—"In estates held, as we call it, in mortmain, there is no inter-community, no natural

privity of interest, between the present possessor and those who may succeed him; and as the former cannot have any pretext of complaint, if, his own right being preserved, the legislature should alter the course of transmission after his decease, so neither is any hardship sustained by others, unless their succession has been already designated, or rendered probable. Corporate property, therefore, appears to stand on a very different footing from that of private individuals; and while all infringements of the established privileges of the latter are to be sedulously avoided, and held justifiable only by the strongest motives of public expediency, we cannot but admit the full right of the legislature to new-mould and regulate the former, in all that does not involve existing interests, upon far slighter reasons of convenience."*

Even assuming this principle as the basis of procedure, there will, without doubt, be practical difficulties, and some of them, possibly, not a little embarrassing. But nothing short of impossibilities ought to stand in the way of the great essential principles of public good,—of the equal rights and equal liberties of the community. Let the difficulties be met and disposed of with all due consideration and prudence; and, where they cannot be thoroughly solved to the satisfaction of all parties, let them be set aside with the smallest possible amount of injury. It would be hard indeed, that the nation should be permanently deprived of an essential improvement in its constitution, because

* Const. Hist. of Eng. vol. i. pp. 101, 102.

there are knots which have been made by the complicated intertwisting of interests that should never have interfered with each other, such as neither political nor ecclesiastical fingers can easily undo. Let all pains be taken to loose them; and, at the point where pains fail, let them by all means be cut.

What passes under the denomination of church property is of two kinds, according to the sources from which it has been acquired—*Government grant*, or *private bequest*. In regard to both, the *principle* of settlement seems plain, whatever difficulties there may be in its *application*. The property which has been granted by Government, has been granted for a special end. If, in consequence of altered circumstances and increasing light in the science of state policy, the Government have arrived at the conviction that the purpose of the endowment may be better answered otherwise,—that the interests of religion will be more effectually provided for *without* it than *with* it,—then the property, as a matter of course, reverts whence it came,—if indeed it be proper to speak of that reverting, which was never alienated. It remains public property, burdened only with the legitimate claims of present incumbents; and then at the disposal of the national legislature, for any other object of public expenditure.

With regard to all *private bequests*,—the simple question ought surely to be,—What was the will of the testator? There was an abstraction of property from the Romish church at the Reformation,

which, in regard to this part of it, could not surely, on any principle of equity, be justified; and could it now be made good, respecting any property that has been in the hands of the Protestant church, that it was originally bequeathed to the church of Rome, not merely as, at the time, the *national establishment*, but *on account of its peculiar faith and worship*, I for one, should urge the righteous act of restitution, that it might be employed according to the testator's will. I should urge this, on the principle, that truth can never ultimately suffer from doing justice. If bequests have been made, on similar grounds, to the episcopalian Church of England, let them be disposed of in the same way; —let them remain in her possession and at her disposal, when still an episcopalian church, although no longer the Church of England: whatever cannot be claimed on clear grounds, falling into the public exchequer, on the demise of the ecclesiastical corporation.—And as to lay-impropriators,—tithe and tiend holders,—who have got their estates under certain burdens for the maintenance of the established churches,—let government make what bargain with them they please:—it were a cheaply-purchased sacrifice in the eyes of all the lovers of spiritual freedom and equality, to let the holders themselves make the most in their power of the increased value of their landed possessions. That in the English church, supposing it to remain an Establishment, benefit might arise from a new distribution of its revenues, of which the unequal appropriation is a frightful anomaly on all the principles

of righteousness, of policy, and of common sense, all will admit. But there are evils more deeply seated than those which arise from any mere circumstantial arrangements, — evils such as no alterations, however extensive and salutary, would effectually cure,—evils inherent in the very principle of ecclesiastical monopoly, and of church and state connexion—for which there is no remedy short of the entire subversion of the system. It is the axe that is wanted,—not the pruning-knife;—removal, not reformation.

# LECTURE VI.

EFFICIENCY OF THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE—VINDICATION OF IT AGAINST MISREPRESENTATIONS AND OBJECTIONS.

It was an injunction of our divine Master, in which, as in every other, our duty and our interest were inseparably combined—"Have faith in God." —We conceive it to be this faith that is the special *desideratum* for the settlement of the present controversy. It ought to embrace the *truths*, the *promises*, the *providence*, and the *precepts* of God. If on the subject of this discussion, his people had a sufficiently clear apprehension and firm belief of the truths and principles relative to the purity, the spirituality, and the independence, of the kingdom of Christ;—a sufficiently assured and steadfast reliance on the promises of God's covenant regarding that kingdom;—a sufficiently confident dependence on the wisdom, faithfulness, love, and power of the providence that watches over its interests, and that hath said,—"Lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day;"—and a sufficiently unwavering conviction of the salutary tendency and operation of every preceptive direction of the divine word;—there would be less of clinging to human aid,—to secular power,—to the arm of flesh; and less of

timid apprehension, and hesitating reluctance, and determined refusal, to cast the church, unreservedly and at once, on those affections and those resources to which, by the will of her supreme and only Head, her maintenance and advancement were originally entrusted. If we have successfully answered the question, "What saith the scripture?"—there ought not to be another. Whenever such answer has been satisfactorily found, inquiry (as formerly observed) ceases, and action commences. Duty is ours—consequences are God's:—and true "faith in God" will be fearless of consequences, where there is assurance of duty. Obedience to divine precepts can never thwart divine purposes.—Here, then, we might have stopped. We have done enough, when we have ascertained God's will from God's word. We might say with Milton,—"Having herein the Scripture so copious and so plain, we have all that can be properly called true strength and nerve; the rest would only be but pomp and incumbrance."—But, while it is true, that, whether we can discern or not the reasonableness of divine institutes,—their appropriateness to their respective subjects and conduciveness to their respective ends, —we are under direct and positive obligation, when they are clearly ascertained, to follow them in faith: —yet it is a source of no little satisfaction, when we do discern this reasonableness, when we can demonstrate the aptitude, the consistency, the efficiency, of those principles which divine wisdom propounds; of those rules which divine authority enacts. And this, to any mind that is at all disposed

to bow implicitly to the dictates of the divine word, it ought not, on the present subject, to be difficult to do.

Christianity is a spiritual system. It is, pre-eminently, the religion of the heart. Its fundamental principle, in regard to the nature of the homage it requires, is, "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth:—the Father seeketh such to worship him." While these words of Him "into whose lips grace was poured," may convey the appropriate sentiment, that under the New Dispensation, the worship presented to God must be offered in the spirit and truth of all the outward typical and ceremonial rites of the Old, —they certainly mean, at the same time, that even the external acts of homage which are done in the service of the supreme and heart-searching Spirit, must be spiritual in their principle,—must be the sincere dictate of the heart's devotion. Now contribution to the maintenance of divine worship,—of the ministry and ordinances of the gospel,—is a prescribed act of christian homage,—one of the sacrifices of the New-Testament worshippers. Like all the rest, therefore, it requires to be done from the heart. While the gift is secular, the principle of the giver must be spiritual. There is nothing in it, otherwise, that God can regard with complacency. "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." These words settle *two principles*:—the one, of divine *equity*—cheering to him who has little, and startling to him who has

much;—the other, of divine *spirituality*, requiring the "willing mind" as indispensable to acceptance, whether it be much or little. The *Voluntary Principle* is thus in harmony with the *genius* of Christianity. Every thing compulsory is opposed to it. The principle of Voluntaryism enters essentially into all christian duties; and whatever interferes with their voluntary character, interferes with all in them that is christian, and acceptable to God. By every state-religion, then, where there is a dominant sect supported in part by exactions from other sects, what an amount of unwelcome offering,—offering, in which the first principle of all acceptable service has been violated,—is presented to the God of truth! Dr. C. may suppose a unanimous public, and the voluntary act of the Government to be an expression of the aggregate Voluntaryism of that public. But, without recurring to the remarks made in our first lecture, on this attempt to identify the Establishment Principle and that of Voluntaryism, and without adverting to the grounds on which even this Utopian supposition, were it a reality, would be objectionable,—it is enough to say at present, that in the case of our own country, it is far otherwise; and far otherwise it must always be, in every country where there is liberty of thought; that it would be inconsistent with both reason and conscience, to expect the willing mind on the part of those who, by compulsory statute, contribute to the support of what they disapprove; and that all that is obtained by such exaction, and is then devoted to the service of God, can never find a gracious

acceptance from Him who says—"I hate robbery for burnt offering."

Dr. C. devotes his second lecture to a "vindication of a religious National Establishment in opposition to the reasonings and views of the economists;"—in other words, in opposition to the principles, as he expounds them, of the free-trade system. As that lecture is not directed against the Voluntaries, we might be excused were we to pass it entirely over, as not coming within our legitimate range. It might be very true, as Dr. C. says, that "the principle of free trade in Christianity" is now "the favourite expression of our senators and economists, as carrying in it more the air of science, or of profound and enlightened statesmanship;"—for true it is, that it is only as one of the many questions in political economy, that the "*savans*," of whom he speaks, ever think of regarding or discussing it. But the conversion of questions of this kind into questions of mere state policy, or secular economics, is one of the very evils to which established churches have given rise. *We* view it in a very different light. The only statesmanship we consider ourselves as having to do with is the statesmanship of the kingdom of Christ. We hold the Voluntary Principle in honour, and sacred and exclusive in obligation, as the principle which the inspired statesmen of that kingdom incorporated with its original constitution in all its departments, and to which they committed the maintenance and advancement of all its interests. We presume, on such subjects, to treat with no ceremonious deference the

"*savans*" of political philosophy, — preferring to them, however justly eminent in their favourite sciences, those who could say—"We have the mind of Christ"—and believing, as the latter did, and teach us to do, that, with regard to practical principles as well as doctrinal, "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God," and "the foolishness of God wiser than men." Nevertheless, since the Voluntaries do plead for *free trade in truth*,—and since the discussions on the free-trade system involve much that has a close affinity to Voluntaryism, and on some points enters essentially into its very nature,—we shall find it conducive to the clearness of our future reasonings on the efficiency of the Voluntary Principle, to offer a few previous strictures on the learned Doctor's representation of the principle of free trade.

In offering these remarks, I would not be thought to enter the lists with Dr. C. on subjects of political economy; a department of science to which he has devoted so much of his attention. I limit myself to the application of the principles laid down by him to the question of Establishments. He avows himself, in regard to commerce, an advocate of freedom,—hostile to the system of imposts and bounties for restraining it in particular departments, and encouraging it in others. He advocates the system of "leaving its various exchanges to the pure "operation of demand and supply; permitting "the two, without interference, to regulate and "qualify each other;" the interests of the dealers being a sufficient guarantee that "the market shall

not be overstocked with any article beyond the extent to which it is sought after." "The supply," says he, "rises and falls just as the demand rises and "falls. Government should make no attempt to "restrain the supply beneath this point by means of "a prohibition, or encourage it above this point by "means of a bounty. Such an interference is an "offence to all wise and enlightened economists; "and resented by them, as a disturbing force that "would violate the harmonies of a beautiful and "well-going mechanism."* While he pleads for this freedom in all the departments of commerce, he denies the applicability of the same principles to the article of *christian instruction*. The denial is grounded on the essential difference between the articles of ordinary commercial traffic, and the articles of the spiritual merchandise of Christianity. There is a natural demand for the one; there is no such natural demand for the other. Differing in this essential circumstance, the two ought not to be left to the regulating influence of the same principles. It will not do to allow the supply of christian instruction to be determined as to the amount in which it is provided, by the actual demand for it,—to be "regulated by the laws, and of course limited by the extent, of the market." "There is no natural 'hungering or thirsting after "righteousness;' and before man will seek that the "want should be supplied, the appetite must first be "created. The less a man has, whether of religion "or righteousness, the less does he care for them,

* Lectures, page 48.

"and the less will he seek after them. It is thus "that nature does not go forth in quest of Chris- "tianity; but Christianity must go forth in quest of "nature. It is, on the one hand, the strength of "the physical appetency; and on the other, the "languor of the spiritual, the moral, or the intel- "lectual appetency, which makes all the difference." "The law of our moral and intellectual is not the "same with, but reverse or contrary to, the law of "physical wants. With the physical, the intensity of "the desire is directly proportional to the want; "with the intellectual and moral, it is inversely pro- "portional; or the less he has of these, the less he "cares for them."*

In the whole of his reasoning, Dr. C. applies his general principle to *education* as well as to *religion*, —to the instruction got at the college or the school, as well as to that got at church. It is with *religion*, however, that I consider myself as having at present more immediately to do. Dr. C. will not himself insist on there being in human nature the same kind or the same degree of aversion to the knowledge acquired by ordinary education, as there is to christian truth. That there is in our fallen nature, arising from its moral and spiritual obliquity and alienation from God, a disrelish of the pure and holy principles of the latter, I hold the same conviction as Dr. Chalmers. I am not sure if it is doing his argument justice, to represent him as denying, unqualifiedly, the existence in human nature of any appetency for *religion*,—when the

* Lectures, pp. 52, 53.

term is understood as comprehending the false as well as the true,—all the endless varieties of superstition as well as scriptural and vital Christianity. It is not the appetite for religion in this enlarged and indefinite acceptation of it, that he contends must be "created,"—but the appetite for "righteousness" in the sense of the Bible phraseology quoted by him. That there is no lack of an appetency for *religion*, the fact of no people having ever been found entirely without it, should be sufficient attestation; although, at the same time, it must be confessed, the traces of it, in some of the more barbarous tribes, have not been easy of detection; and the position of Dr. C. has been sufficiently substantiated, that the grosser the ignorance, the less the desire of knowledge. But I must consider my present opponent as speaking of christian truth,—of the principles of evangelical protestantism. To these he is conscientiously, and from experience and observation of their saving power, attached; and these, in the knowledge and influence of them, he is sincerely solicitous to diffuse. And with respect to these, I admit there *is* no natural appetite for them in the moral constitution of fallen man. It must be "created." But when Dr. C. uses this phrase, he is, I presume, to be understood as referring, not to the operation of *divine*, but of *human* agency,—not to the influence of the Spirit, of whose necessity he had spoken in the outset of his first lecture, but to the influence of christian zeal in carrying, and offering, and recommending, and urging on acceptance, the spiritual knowledge and spiritual blessings

contained in the gospel. He uses the phrase—"the appetite must be created," in the same or a similar sense with that in which merchants speak of *creating a demand* for any newly discovered, or newly invented article of consumption. They do not wait for the demand,—well knowing that it can never arise of itself for that of whose existence men are not aware, or of whose nature they are completely ignorant. They go forth on their mercantile speculations. They make their article known; they show it; they explain and expatiate upon its recommendatory qualities; they invite and importune to a trial of it. They thus succeed in raising or "creating" a demand. And it is thus that Christians do with the gospel:—thus—only with two important points of difference,—the one in the motive, respectively, of the christian and the mercantile adventure,—and the other (a consequence of the difference of motive) in the extent of persevering importunity with which the adventure is prosecuted. With the merchant, we have the motive of self-interest. He prepares a certain quantity of his article, to give it a prudent trial, and ascertain whether it is likely to *take;* and if he finds it will not do, he quits the market, and betakes himself to something else. But with the Christian, we have the combined motive of zeal for God, and benevolence to men: producing a patient and persevering importunity, unknown to the merchant. The object of the missionary, whether at home or abroad, is—not to speculate in truth, as an article of barter, only "where there is wealth enough and will enough

to ensure a remunerating price for the expense of its preparation" and export; but to glorify God and to save souls. He does not, therefore, satisfy himself with presenting his article, and, if it is not immediately or very soon received, quitting his station, and leaving the people to do without it. He remains. He settles. He renews unceasingly, and with affectionate urgency, the examination and acceptance of it. He uses every legitimate art of argument, entreaty, expostulation, persuasion,—and associates with these the power of example and prayer. His disinterested maxim is—"We seek not yours, but you:"—"Not seeking our own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."

It is truly surprising to find Dr. C. so enamoured of the principle of his argument on this subject. He turns it round, and sets it in every diversity of light, and repeats the contemplation of it in the same light. He beats it out to its utmost extent of malleability, till it may be seen through from its very thinness. Having mentioned the date of his first exposition of it,—the year 1817,—a date which Britain can never forget,—the sermon, in the appendix to which it was contained, having been preached on the death of that illustrious and promising princess on whom her hopes were so fondly and sanguinely fixed,—but whose place it has now pleased Providence to supply with another, whose auspicious reign may Heaven prolong and prosper!—he proceeds to say—"This argument I have been incessantly repeating since on numberless occasions, and "in a variety of forms; but it strikingly marks the

"slow progress wherewith a principle before unheard "of makes way in society—that for at least fifteen "years any testimony I could lift on the subject was "like the voice of one crying in the wilderness."*— This is strange. "A principle *before unheard of*." —That it might not have appeared before *in the same form*, may be true. But the form into which a principle is thrown, is not the principle itself. To every christian mind the principle itself is one of self-evident simplicity and truth;—and I will venture to say, that, when divested of its philosophical, its politico-economical attire, there is not a christian man, of even the most ordinary capacity and information, who would not stare, that so much learned argumentation should be about a matter so plain.— It is the more surprising, inasmuch as Dr. C. sets himself to show, and of course does show most successfully, that the very principle which he maintains was the principle acted upon at the outset of the career of Christianity, and is to this hour in practical operation, in the whole system of christian missions. By whom on earth, indeed, was the contrary principle — the free-trade principle as expounded by Dr. C.—ever held;—the principle, that the supply of Christianity, or of christian instruction, should be regulated by the demand;— that Christians should wait for that demand;—or that, in their attempts to create it, they should, like merchants, calculate on "a safe and profitable return for the cost of the undertaking?"—On what principle did the Apostles and first Christians pro-

* Lectures, page 55, note.

ceed, in their efforts to spread the gospel, but on that laid down by Dr. C.?—and what was the reason of their proceeding thus, but the reason assigned by Dr. C.? The order of their Master was not,—Wait till you are sent for;—but, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." In fulfilling this commission, they were influenced by *two considerations*;—the *first*, that men could not so much as know of the existence of Christianity, till they were told of it, and could not, therefore, by possibility, ever think of sending for it;—and the *second*, that they themselves knew well the opposition of the human heart to their message, —the absence of all natural appetency for the holy and humbling doctrines they had it in commission to teach,—and the consequent necessity of pressing it in every way, and that freely, "without money and without price," on their attention and acceptance.—And if they thus acted upon the principle,—why should the principle be represented as one "before unheard of,"—merely because the Apostles not being political economists, did not put the principle into duly scientific form?

Dr. C. distinguishes the free-trade scheme from the system of the Voluntaries, which he calls expressly, "another scheme, which, though generally held to be identical with the former, is, in some respects, different from it."—In the opening of his third lecture, he thus writes:—"The Voluntary "Principle is partly at variance with the doctrine of "a free trade in Christianity, but far from being "altogether so; though thus generally imagined by

"our undiscriminating adversaries, who, in the "management of this controversy, have so con- "founded the things which differ, as to assail the "system of endowments, sometimes under the "former argument, and sometimes under the latter "—unconscious, all the while, of such an occasional "conflict and contrariety between the two reasons "which themselves employ, that the one reason "often completely neutralizes the other." Thus shrewdly does he detect, and not very ceremoniously hold up to scorn, "the mote in his brother's eye." It is not for us to deny the charge. Unless we can disprove it, by showing ourselves more capable of discrimination than the Doctor gives us credit for, it must even stand against us. But we cannot help entertaining a suspicion,—whether the result of our "thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think" or not, *you* must be the judges,—that the discovery of the mote in our vision, has been the effect, not of a sound and penetrating clear-sightedness, but of some optical illusion, occasioned by a "beam in his own."

When Dr. C. says (p. 47), "With many, there is a confused imagination, that, previous to the establishment of Christianity, the whole ministry of the gospel was conducted on the system of free trade," he affirms what, *in the sense affixed by him to the free-trade system*, is not, and never was true, in one solitary instance. Who among the Voluntaries now holds, or who among them ever held, the sentiment, that before the establishment of Christianity, the maintenance and propagation of the gospel were

conducted upon the plan of waiting for a demand, or proportioning the supply to the demand, or furnishing the article only to those who could afford a sufficient remunerating price for it? Who ever admitted the "imagination" that then the business of spreading the truth was a matter entirely of bargain between those who imported the article—the missionary servants of God, namely—and those among whom it was introduced, *without the intervention of any third party?* There *was* a third party; a third party amply and cheerfully providing the means. *The whole christian church* was that third party. There *was* a bounty; but it was a bounty from no earthly government; all in that quarter being discountenance and opposition. It was provided by christian love, and christian zeal. It was the bounty of generous hearts, longing for the Redeemer's glory and the world's salvation, and holding out encouragement to those who were willing to "spend and be spent," for the attainment of these great ends. It was the free and spontaneous operation of the *Voluntary Principle;* and it was, as Dr. C. most truly says, "contrary to every law "or character of pure trade"——"it was not as "in the ordinary exchanges of commerce. The "receivers were not the purchasers; and what they "did receive was not a thing by them bought, but "a thing to them given." All true. But what shall we make of the "discrimination" in what immediately follows?—"It is an utter misconception, that "when Constantine set up in his dominions a Na-"tional Establishment of Christianity, he made the

" first infringement on that system of free trade by " which the prosperity of this religion had been " heretofore upholden; for, from its very outset, " Christianity stood indebted for almost every foot- " step of its progress to a system and a policy di- " rectly the opposite of this. When he came forth " with his great imperial bounty or benefaction, " he only did on the large scale, what thousands " of benefactors had previously, for hundreds of " years, done on a small scale before him."*—Here is the "*beam.*" Dr. C. would have better reason than we presume to think he has, for representing us as "undiscriminating adversaries," were we so deficient in discernment as not to detect it. It is with *principles*, not with *facts*, I am at present concerned; else the inaccuracy might be noticed of the statement respecting Constantine "coming forth with his great imperial bounty or benefaction." What Constantine actually did, we shall have occasion to notice immediately. It is enough for our purpose now, that the fact is *supposed*, and that what was *not* done by Constantine,—namely, bestowing a direct endowment, or national largess, upon the church,—has been done by other crowned heads after him. We have, in the sentences just cited, the first specimen of the fallacy which pervades the entire book,—a fallacy to which we had occasion to advert in our first lecture,—that, namely, of confounding the *official application of the public money*, with the free personal benefactions of individuals. Nothing can well be more palpable than the differ-

* Lectures, page 59.

ence between these; nor do we think it altogether seemly in him who thus confounds them, to tax others, in terms of such lofty superciliousness, with the want of discrimination. The funds of the state are not the sovereign's own. They can be so regarded only under such wretched despotisms as are constituted on the debasing principle of the people themselves being his own. They are not so, under any government that retains a single element of freedom. The individual devotes that which is his own, in the exercise of a natural and inalienable right, to his own ends:—the sovereign, in endowing a particular faith and worship, devotes what is not his own, but his people's, to ends that please himself, without consulting them. The individual devotes what is his own, to the support of his own religion, because he believes it to be right, leaving all others at full liberty to devote what is theirs to the support of *their* religion, though he believes it to be wrong;—he gives for the promotion of what he thinks truth, without interfering with those who may choose to give for the promotion of what, in his eyes, is error:—the sovereign gives, for the support of what he, really or by help of an official fiction, holds to be right, the money of those who hold it to be wrong. The individual, giving personally, and leaving others to give personally, only excites the emulation of a free-trade competition between truth and error:—the sovereign, giving officially, from the resources of the public, creates a monopoly in behalf of the endowed system, conferring upon it a protecting and encouraging

bounty, and leaving all other systems, worthy or unworthy, at a disadvantage and discount,—and that too, at the expense of the purse and the conscience of all who hold them. It is for the absence, or the abrogation, of all such monopolies and bounties, that we contend, as constituting the correct idea of what we still see no harm in calling a *free trade in truth*. There are three ingredients, indeed, which may be considered as entering into this most desirable species of free trade:—*first*, as has been said, the absence of all bounty and monopoly in behalf of any one faith or worship, to the detriment, or intended detriment, of others;—*secondly*, the absence of all legislative compulsion of the conscientious believers of one system, to support and extend another;—and *thirdly*, the absence of all restraint, and the enjoyment of unfettered liberty, by all sects and parties, in promoting the diffusion of their principles, in every way that does not interfere with the peace and order of civil society. In one word, what ought to be the primary aim of all rulers, in the application of *public* funds, but the securing to their subjects, by a system of liberal and impartial administration, the largest possible amount of freedom in the voluntary application of such as are *private*? We presume, that the end contemplated in affixing restrictive imposts and granting protecting bounties, is, not the production of an appetency for any particular article, but the forcing of that appetency, where it already exists, into a particular channel,—obliging it, of various descriptions of the same article, to use one rather than another:—while

the principle of the free-trade system is that of leaving all open to fair and impartial competition. The imposition of a duty on imported corn, or the prohibition of its importation except in certain specified conditions of the home market, is not designed to *create an appetite for bread*, but to *oblige the consumer to make use of a home-grown article*. And if of the various descriptions of grain that are grown at home, *one* were selected, and a bounty given for its cultivation, and a restrictive impost laid upon the rest,—if a bounty, for example, were offered for the growth of wheat, and a duty laid upon barley and oats, and rye,—the end would be the same, to oblige the consumer to use the former in preference to any of the latter; thus subjecting the lovers of oats, and barley, and rye, to the hardship of paying dear for the article they like, or using one which they comparatively *dis*like. The case is the same in regard to religion. The natural appetency for it, in some form or other, existing in the human mind, the granting of a chartered and endowed monopoly to one or another of these forms, is intended to constrain that appetency in the favoured direction; to induce a preference of the endowed faith and worship, and put those who prefer another to the disadvantage of either conforming to that which their consciences disapprove, or of at once contributing compulsorily to the support of the chartered church, and voluntarily to that of the one they prefer. And when we speak of a *free trade in religion*, we mean,—not the literal reduction of religion to a matter of com-

mercial speculation and traffic;—not the regulation of the supply by the demand, and the retention of the supply till the demand arises;—not the exclusion of all stimulating interference, and the payment, in all cases, of the cost of the article by those who are the recipients of it;—but religious equality; the removal of all favouritism,—of all bounties on one description of the article, and consequent restrictions on others; and the same impartial freedom to all, in maintaining and promoting the system of faith and worship, be it what it may, which they respectively prefer, as having the sanction of divine authority.

Free trade in religion, it will from this be observed, is something more than *toleration*;—than toleration, even in the largest acceptation of the term compatible with the existence of an endowed and chartered church. There have been times in the history of our country, when our forefathers had good reason for being thankful to Providence even for toleration. But these days are gone by. The happy advance of society in just notions of religious liberty has taught us now to hear with sentiments of indignation, a term which, in times of old, inspired the emotions of gratitude. No gratitude was ever due for it *to man*. We do not thank a thief for restoring our stolen goods. As little do we thank a despot, or a bigot, for conceding to us a right which he had no more title to withhold, than the thief had to abstract our property. The rights of conscience are ours, by the authority of nature, and by the blood-bought charter of the Son of God.

The man who interferes with them usurps a divine prerogative, and, even while he may "think that he is doing God service," is chargeable with an act of the most ignorant and arrogant presumption. No gratitude, surely, can be due for being permitted to enjoy by *sufferance* that which we possess by divine and imprescriptible right; and what we are not only not bound to surrender to fellow-creatures, but bound to retain and to exercise, should property, and liberty, and life be the forfeiture. The right to tolerate implies a right to restrain; a right which no man under heaven ever possessed, how often soever it may have been claimed, and by whatever illegitimate power enforced. Our forefathers were thankful, because they lived in times when even those who were most beyond their age in their notions of religious freedom were still but partially enlightened. Let us be thankful to Providence, that our lot has been cast in better days, and that we anticipate the speedy arrival of better still;—of a period, when there shall be a universal erasure from the British statute-books of all legislative enactments on the subject of religion, and when all legislation for the future on the same subject, shall cease; when there shall be no bounty in favour of one sect, and no unjust exactions in its support from others; no religious monopolies, and no religious restraints and privations; no persecution, and no toleration; no enjoying of privileges by sufferance under unrepealed statutes of iniquity and oppression, which leave victims exposed to the tender mercies of the cruel, the vindictive sullenness of the bigotted, or

the reckless irritations of the capricious:—but when all sects and parties shall be thrown upon their own resources, and left to the efforts of their own zeal; when in this department, as in others,—I would say in this department *above all others*,—every thing shall be allowed, without state favour or state discountenance, to find, by a fair and honourable competition, its own level; when civil government shall be what its designation imports, and, confining itself to its proper department, shall leave the church of God to manage its own affairs; when, in one word,—and I use the phrase without hesitation, although I am aware it is, in the minds of some, ominous of all imaginable evil,—of the cessation of all piety and righteousness, and the abandonment of the country to every description of error, ungodliness and vice ——when religion shall be—LEFT TO ITSELF!—Far different are the results which I anticipate. My principle, deeply seated in the convictions of my mind, and in harmony, I fully believe, with the dictates of that word from which, in sincerity at least, it has been drawn, is,—that the state and the church will thrive best apart; that when the magistrate, in the language of Milton, shall have "learned not further to concern himself with church affairs, half his labour will be spared, and the commonwealth be better tended;" and that true religion, left in the hands of those who themselves know it, and experience its power, and appreciate its excellence, and feel its joys, and are animated by its hopes, will be under its only appropriate care—the care which will most securely preserve its vitality and purity,

and most effectually ensure its extension. We presume it to be the principle of common sense, adopted in all descriptions of trade, that they are best qualified to deal successfully in any article, who are best acquainted with its nature, and properties, and uses, and relative value. And there is no one thing in regard to which this is more emphatically true than religion. All, indeed, *ought* to know it,—and to know it by experience: but all, alas! do not thus know it. And by those who do not, the management of its interests had better be let alone. Their attempts to deal in it will do much more harm than good. Our aim is twofold;—that all who do know it should be roused to a sense of the paramount obligation lying upon them to seek its diffusion,—an obligation which is only now, so far as the modern history of the church is concerned, beginning to be felt as it ought;—and that all should be placed on the same footing of unrestricted privilege and freedom, in carrying this obligation into practical fulfilment.

We are agreed, then, on the great point, that there must be aggression;—that we are not to wait for a demand;—that in the spirit of piety, and benevolence, and patriotism, we are to attempt the diffusion of religion among those who, left to themselves, would make no movement towards seeking it;—that, in the language of Mr. Wilberforce, which is in accordance with that of Dr. C.,—since "it is the disease of men's nature to be insensible of its existence, and still more of its virulence,—religion must be offered to men, must go in quest of them."*—The

* Life, vol. ii. p. 421. App.

question is,—*By whom* is this to be done?—and on *what principle?*—These may seem two questions; but they are substantially the same. For, if the maintenance and diffusion of religion is to be the concern of the state, or civil government, then must the end be prosecuted on the principle of supplying the means from the public funds,—the funds raised by the compulsory taxation of the community. If it is to be the concern of the church, then must the appeal be to the Voluntary Principle—the principle of christian liberality, springing from love and zeal.

To the more direct consideration of the sufficiency of this principle, we now proceed.

Dr. C. states the precise point of controversy in the following terms:—"We presume it to be "agreed on both sides, that the outcast millions "ought to be reclaimed from the ignorance and "irreligion of heathenism. The only difference "relates to the party at whose expense this great "achievement ought to be perfected;—whether by "private Christians, under the impulse of a religious "benevolence,—or by an enlightened government, "under the impulse of a paternal regard for the "highest weal of its subject population." This, we admit, is essentially the point of agreement, and the point of difference. We have no wish to be captious. Yet, while we make this admission, we must object to the too partial form in which the latter,—the point of difference,—is stated. The partiality is twofold. On the one side, we have simply the benevolence of "private Christians,"—which limits the agency too much to the efforts of indi-

viduals,—whereas the collective philanthropy of the church of God ought to have been included,—the liberality and the energy of all the different christian denominations, in their associated and congregational capacities. And, while there is a contraction of the means on the one side, fitted to convey an impression of their littleness, there is too favourable a picture of the character of the agency on the other—"an enlightened government, under the impulse of a paternal regard for the highest weal of its subject population." Even were this character always realized, we should still object to the principle of a state-endowed church, on the grounds assigned in former lectures. But we cannot allow the argument of our opponents to assume to itself the advantage of a representation like this. The question must not be permitted to rest on the character of the government. This is evidently a point which we cannot command. It is not secured by our present constitution; nor can we imagine to ourselves a constitution by which it could. A government such as is here described would require to be a government composed of really *christian men*. Such men only can be supposed under the impulse of a "paternal regard for the highest weal" —that is, the spiritual and everlasting weal—"of its subject population." It is easy to be Utopian—nothing easier,—and to imaginative spirits it may be very pleasant,—and to sketch and fill up fascinating portraitures of christian monarchs, and christian ministries, all alive to the value of true religion,—understanding its principles, experiencing its power,

and solicitous for the diffusion of its influence. But when we travel back from our Utopia, and return to the realities of history, we are constrained to admit that such characters are mighty rarities. This the great Head of the church well knew; and he would not entrust the interests of his spiritual kingdom at all to the "princes of this world." If it be true, that of that kingdom no one can even be a genuine *subject* who has not been "born again,"—what a deplorable anomaly, when men who show themselves alike destitute of the knowledge and the spirit and the practice of true religion, and of every vestige of evidence of their possessing what the King of Zion declares essential to the character of his people, should, by churches professing to be portions of that kingdom, be acknowledged, in virtue of a hereditary political dignity, not members only of their communion, but their supreme heads on earth, and legally incapable of excommunication,—or should even be allowed to preside, by their representatives, in their highest ecclesiastical courts.

Bating these things, we admit the question to be, not whether "the outcast millions ought to be reclaimed"—for in this we are agreed; but *by whom* this is to be done,—by the church, or by the state,—or, which is the same thing, by the Voluntary Principle, or by government bounty. Of the former our opponents, in the strongest and most contemptuous terms, affirm the *incompetency*. On this point, then, allow me to observe—

1. There is a previous question, — a question

whose primary claim to a definite settlement, we must ever, from conscience towards God, maintain;—the question, Is it, or is it not, a divinely sanctioned principle? Is it, or is it not, the principle recognised in the New Testament, as that to which the infinitely wise entrusted the preservation and extension of his church? If it be—it follows at once, without a single intermediate link of argument, that it *must be sufficient*;—unless we are prepared to admit, that the exalted Head of the church has committed her interests to a principle that is not fit for his purpose. "He that reproveth God, let him answer it."

We formerly expressed our astonishment, that Dr. C. should have attempted to identify the two principles of state support and voluntary contribution; and endeavoured to show, that, by the same process of reasoning, he might establish identity between a legal provision for the poor, and their dependence on private and spontaneous charity. There is another thing analogous to this, at which we are hardly less surprised. It is, that this good and able man should be so warm an advocate for the sufficiency of the latter of these two sources of supply for the destitute,—namely, spontaneous charity,—the ordinary humane sympathies of our nature; and should show himself, at the same time, so exceedingly distrustful of the sufficiency of a higher principle,—the principle of christian benevolence,—for the supply of the spiritual destitution of our race. We could quote, and quote with approbation (unless in some instances the strength

of them might require to be somewhat qualified), characteristically energetic paragraphs in eulogy of the operation of the humanity and reciprocal kindness of our nature, even amongst the poor themselves,—in relieving mutually all real wants and distresses. Why, then, is he so unwilling to entrust the supply of spiritual wants, and the relief of spiritual miseries, to the principle of spiritual philanthropy in the bosoms of God's own people? Why does he object so strenuously against all government endowments for the poor, and plead so strenuously in favour of such endowments for the church? Why so eager to give over the temporally destitute to the charge of spontaneous humanity, and so averse to giving over the spiritually destitute to the charge of christian charity? Why so laudatory of the one principle,—why so scornfully vituperative of the other? Of the Voluntary Principle, which is just the principle of christian benevolence, he speaks in terms of the most sarcastic contumely: he denominates it, "that most frail and fluctuating of all securities;" he sneers at "the impotency of the great sectarian specific," and at "its essential and inherent imbecility;" and attempts, as others had done before him, to trace all the accumulated evils of the church to the early operation of this principle. Was Dr. C. fully convinced, from a candid examination of the New Testament, that this principle had no divine authority, ere he ventured thus to treat it with such taunting scorn? It would certainly have been well, had he, and others who have talked and written in similar terms, clearly made

out, in the first instance, its destitution of such authority. In that case, as they would only have been deriding what was human, it might have been presumption on our part to find fault. But if they are unable to find *their* principle in the New Testament, as Dr. C. admits, and are equally unable to displace *ours* from it, what shall we say? They may treat my gravity with a smile of corresponding scorn to that with which they treat the principle,—I cannot help it,—but I tell them, with affectionate seriousness, that my heart has been heavy at the thought of ministers of Christ treating in a manner so bitterly contemptuous a divinely sanctioned principle. I should think I needed for it the virtue of the blood of sprinkling, had I the charge of such presumption upon my conscience. Had Dr. C. spoken of the imbecility of the principle *as now in operation*, it had been well. The imputation would have rested on human deficiency. But when he represents the imbecility as "*inherent*," the charge is against the principle itself, and reaches further back,—falling upon *divine prescription*.

Dr. C., in good keeping with the contumelious terms already quoted, speaks of the "Voluntary Principle" as a "rival" or "antagonist to the doctrine of an Establishment," which has been "*conjured up within these few years*" under that designation. But although the particular designation may be thus modern, it is not so with the principle. It is coeval, according to its very latest date,—for we shall not at present contest the point about the more remote,—with the christian era. It was introduced by the

Apostles. They were the conjurors to whom we are indebted for it. I am a voluntary, because—and solely because—the Apostles were voluntaries. Whenever their voluntaryism has been successfully disproved, that moment I shall part with mine. To them, then, I again make my appeal. By their decision, I stand or fall. In answer to all disputes about the sufficiency of the Voluntary Principle, I must ever, in the *first* instance, move the previous question. But—

2. The Voluntary Principle was subjected to a fair trial of its efficiency.—We have the record of its results during the period embraced by the New-Testament history and epistles; and that record is pregnant with instruction and delight. The gospel then evinced its inherent expansive energies. It manifested its power to open and to warm the human heart. The supplies that were laid at the Apostles' feet, for all the exigencies of the infant but rapidly growing community, attested the love and the liberality which the faith of it inspired, and showed what return a right estimate and experience of its value were fitted to ensure. And this was not a mere flash of temporary enthusiasm. There was principle in it; and it proved itself lasting. When we extend our appeal for the sufficiency of the principle to the first three centuries, we are not to be understood as affirming, that it continued to operate with the same purity, the same intelligence, the same humility and love, as at first,—the same spirit of grateful self-renunciation in the givers, and the same laborious self-devoting humility in the

receivers. Far from it. Like every thing else, it suffered deterioration. Self-righteousness and superstition came to characterise too many of the people, —covetousness and ambition too many of the clergy; the latter encouraging principles which they found so conducive to their own wealth and aggrandizement. But, while there are proofs abundant of the irregularity and corruption of its exercise, it is remarkable that, amidst the anxiety that has by some been betrayed to muster and to blazon those proofs, no attempt has ever been made to prove the one thing that required to be established—its *insufficiency*. The evidence adduced by those who disown it—is evidence, not of its *defectiveness*, but of its *excess*. But is it fair to disown and repudiate a principle, because, in course of time, it has contracted corruption in its exercise? Were it so, we might well ask, where is the principle, whether of truth or of action, in the christian system, which we could retain? Superstitious notions, and superstitious abuses, began early to associate themselves both with baptism and the Lord's supper: do we think it right to relinquish them on that account? The great and fundamental article of christian truth,—the doctrine of justification by grace,—was abused to licentiousness; are we therefore to abandon it, and the hopes founded upon it? Let me suppose, that some sad declension of evangelical character had found its way into the church:—what would our course of procedure be? Should we think of substituting any doctrine, or system of doctrines, of our own, in order to supply the place,

and work out the results, of that which had failed of its due efficiency? Should we not rather, in the full conviction that the cause of the declension was to be found, not in any tendency, nor even defectiveness of influence, in the evangelical doctrines themselves, but either in the substitution of some "other gospel,"—or in a too formal, speculative, and heartless exhibition of the true,—or in the many deadening influences of the world, operating upon the remaining depravity and earthly-mindedness of the people of God;—should we not endeavour, by all means, to call back those doctrines into prominence, to hold them forth in their original simplicity, to purge them of every human ingredient, to press them, in their unadulterated purity, on universal reception, and to make them, with prayer for the divine influence, the instrument of resuscitation and newness of life? If such should be our course with the principles of *truth*, it should be the same with the principles of *action*. Our business is, not to introduce a new principle and plan of our own, in lieu of those which had the authoritative sanction of Apostles, but which, through whatever cause, have unhappily been perverted,—but to come back to the inspired record, to set forth the principle by which the church was then actuated, and the plan which it then followed, and to urge the adoption and the energetic application of what was then so pre-eminently successful; to appeal to primitive principles, that we may obtain anew primitive results. Mark the *partiality* with which Dr. C. reasons on the opposite sides of the same question. Through-

out his Lectures, when he attempts to show the inadequacy of the Voluntary Principle, he takes his ground simply on the fact of the deficiencies apparent in the results of its application by dissenters, in what he calls the "outfield of the Establishment." He urges the fact alone, without excuse or palliation. But when he admits, as in strong terms he does, the experienced inefficiency of the Irish Establishment, how differently he proceeds! "And "in like manner," says he, "would we speak of the "past, which belongs to the clergy of the Protestant "Establishment in Ireland. They virtually did "undertake the christian education of the families "in their respective parishes; and, I speak only of "the generations that are past, they have not "acquitted themselves of that undertaking. It is "in the spirit of an even-handed justice, that we "would make this avowal; for, though it never "can vindicate, it at least explains, and perhaps in "some degree palliates, the indifference, nay in "some instances, we believe, the hostility, even "unto death, of many of our statesmen to the "church of our sister kingdom. It cannot be dis-"guised that, with many illustrious and honourable "exceptions, the clergy, as a body, have not, during "the whole of the last century, done what they "might, or done what they ought, for the culti-"vation of the vineyard made over by the state to "their care; and which, in return for their mainte-"nance, they should have put into right order, and "kept in right order."* So far, all appears candid

* Lectures, page 125.

and fair. Does he then, having made this statement, proceeding on his previously avowed preference of "experience to experiments," draw his inference immediately from the facts against the system? No, truly. He adds — "But we must not lose sight of the goodness of a machine in the badness of the working of it." And he goes on to expatiate on this exculpatory distinction. Now, I ask, is this "even-handed justice?" Why does not he apply the same distinction on the other side? Why does he not, when he has pointed out the defectiveness in the actual results of the Voluntary Principle, find room for the reflection — "But we must not lose sight of the goodness of a principle in the local or temporary insufficiency of its operation?" —and the more especially when, in the primitive working of the principle, we have so fair a counter-experience, as a set-off against its partial failure amongst ourselves. I think I may venture to say, that every time the actual failure of the Establishment principle happens to be introduced, we have this distinction specified, and carefully pressed upon our notice, in excuse or alleviation. But in no one instance is the benefit of it extended to Voluntaryism. *Its* failure is left, on all occasions, without apology and without mitigation. Is this in harmony with the apostolic injunction, to "do nothing by partiality?"

3. The insufficiency of the Voluntary Principle is argued upon unfair and partial premises.—For example; it is very common with our church friends, and Dr. C. exemplifies it as remarkably as any one

of them, to point to what *dissenters* have done, or are now doing, and, with a kind of sarcastic triumph, to exclaim—as if this were quite a Q.E.D.—"Behold the incompetency of their boasted Voluntaryism!" Now, there can be nothing more uncandid than such premises, nothing more precipitate and unsound than such a conclusion. The extreme partiality with which Dr. C. applies his distinction between a machine and the working of it, has just been pointed out,—how invariably he introduces his saving clause on the one side, and as invariably leaves it out on the other. I have now to add, that even although at times the existing destitution of spiritual instruction, especially in towns, is contemplated by him in the recollection of *both the Establishment and Voluntary Principle having been in operation*, the inference is drawn against the latter with incomparably greater inculpation than against the former. "The inquiry should first be made," he says, "at the doors of the householders; and "their answers, when thoroughly sifted, and sub-"jected, if need be, to the correction of various tests "which it is needless to specify, will exhibit a melan-"choly proof of the impotency, the glaring impo-"tency, of that Voluntaryism, which, in the arrogance "of its boasted sufficiency, would supersede every "other method but its own, for the spread of a "christian education throughout the community at "large. A mighty field has lain open to its enter-"prises for several generations: and yet what has "been the result? We do not need to guess, or to "speculate, on the probabilities; for we can lay our

"immediate hand on the verities of the subject."* And he proceeds to state, in regard to "large towns where the population has greatly out-grown the capacity of the established churches to hold them," what these verities are. But why so partial a conclusion, in regard to the fault of remaining destitution,—the correctness or incorrectness of whose stated amount is not my present concern? The fact is, that in such towns, a much larger amount of church accommodation and pastoral superintendence has been furnished by the principle of Voluntaryism than by that of the Establishment; and a decided majority of the church-going population, and of stated communicants, or enrolled members of christian congregations, is to be found with the dissenters. The sole question, therefore, as to the sufficiency or insufficiency of either the one system or the other, has respect to that part of the population that remains in a state of ignorance and vice, and whose spiritual destitution is not adequately, or at all, attended to. Now, ought it not, in all candour, to be borne in mind, that in regard to such outcasts, *both systems* have been in existence,—and that, whatever be the extent of deficiency, the fault, in as far as a fault is chargeable, rests with both? Why then does not Dr. C. say, "Their answers will exhibit a melancholy proof of the incompetency, the glaring incompetency, of that *state-endowment system*, which, in the arrogance of its boasted sufficiency, would supersede every other method but its own?" I say—"would supersede every other method but its

* Lectures, pp. 139, 140.

own"—for, be it remembered, the true *principle* of an Establishment is—the whole population to itself—the entire maintenance of the system by the state—and the consequent exclusion, were it possible, of dissent and voluntaryism alike.—The conclusion to which these observations lead is, that, to the extent in which the destitution really exists, *both systems have failed* And should Dr. C. allege, in behalf of his own—that the failure is owing to the endowment system not having been carried far enough, to the machine not having been sufficiently extended, and adequately worked; are not Voluntaries entitled to advance the same plea in behalf of *theirs*,—that the Voluntary System has not been carried far enough,—that their machine has not been sufficiently extended, or adequately worked? Is not the proper result, that both churchmen and dissenters have had abund an reason hitherto to be ashamed of themselves? and are we not thus brought back to our primary and our only legitimate inquiry—What is the principle that has the sanction of New-Testament authority? The answer to this question is the answer to all. For when we have found a divinely sanctioned principle, the only remaining duty is, in the full confidence of its rectitude and its adequacy, to work it to the uttermost, and to bring it up, in our own bosoms, and in the bosoms of others, to the standard of energy, of generosity, and of effort, that is required by the existing exigency. Here is the duty, the personal duty of the individual, the collective duty of the church of Christ. Nothing can be more unfair and ungenerous, than, in estimating the suf-

ficiency of the principle for supplying the existing destitution, to point incessantly to what it has done by means of the different dissenting bodies. When did the dissenters ever pretend to be capable of taking upon themselves the responsibility, in all its extent, independently of the cooperation of their christian brethren of the Establishment?—and why should such responsibility be laid upon them, or their incompetency to undertake the whole work be represented as a proof of the failure of their principle? When they speak of its sufficiency for the whole work, they of course proceed on the assumption of its general adoption, of its due excitement, and of the combined energies of the christian community, throughout the country, being brought to bear upon the object. Were this the case, I should see no ground for apprehension. The work would be done to incomparably better purpose, than by any system of state-endowment. The christian community has undertaken a much more extensive work—the evangelization of the world. Dr. C., I presume, would not be for laying any portion of the responsibility of *this* work upon the government. It belongs, and is admitted to belong, to the church alone. And I have never, I confess, seen the fairness of making their incompetency for missionary undertakings a ground of objection to Establishments; inasmuch as this forms no part of what Establishments at all contemplate, or are designed to effect; and it is hardly candid to find an exception against any system from its unsuitableness, or inadequacy, to an end which it was never designed

to accomplish. The avowed object of such Establishments, taking the simplest and most favourable view of them, is the provision of christian instruction for the population of the country itself where they exist. They look no further; and it is wrong to make them answerable for not doing what it never was in their contemplation to do. This, however, we have to say,—that if the christian community can, without shrinking from the vastness of the project, admit that the charge of *the world* pertains to it, and that, by the authority of its exalted Lord, it lies under imperative obligation to attempt, to prosecute, and to accomplish, its entire evangelization; there is surely a strange incongruity in its shrinking, with so desponding a sense of incompetency, from the contemplation of the spiritual wants of Britain alone—our own country, a field of such limited extent, and of which every part is accessible to us at so little comparative expense, either of personal effort or of pecuniary outlay. What we want is, not *means*, but the *spirit to use them*. Let there be but a right impression on the mind of the christian community, of the great apostolic incentive to liberality—"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might be made rich;"—let there be but a conviction and inward experience of the truth of the divinely generous aphorism—"It is more blessed to give than to receive;" and the treasury of the church will be replenished, to the full extent of all the exigencies of her charity. Let but Christians feel as they ought

what they owe to the cross; and, at the foot of the cross, with a full heart and a full eye, they will "open their treasures and present their gifts." There has been a happy advance in the average scale of christian liberality, within the last thirty years; but it is yet very far from having reached its maximum. It had long been subject to the necessarily repressing and paralyzing influence of an Establishment, which, by taking the charge out of the *hands* of individuals, unavoidably lowered the sense of responsibility in the *consciences* of individuals, and by the appropriation of the charge to the state, unnerved the previous energies of the church. Be it remembered that I am speaking of protestant Establishments. It may seem not very appropriate to speak of Establishments as having unnerved, in regard to liberality, the energies of the church, in the face of the fact, that at the period of the reformation, one-third of the lands in England, and one-half in Scotland, were in the possession of the church. But it must not be forgotten, that this was not the result of the Establishment, but of the nature of the religion established. It only furnishes one amongst unnumbered proofs, how much more of what is merely external can be effected, in our fallen world, by superstition than by true religion; how much men may be induced to sacrifice of what is secular,—and especially at death, when they themselves have no more use for it,—when by such sacrifice they can be absolved from the obstriction of their consciences by the spiritual demands of the divine law, and from the crucifixion of the flesh and

the abjuration of the world. It would be a prostitution of terms to ascribe to the operation of the Voluntary Principle,—the principle of love, of gratitude to God, and benevolence to men,—those benefactions which were the really extorted, though apparently spontaneous, results of that antichristian delusion, which imposed on its credulous votaries the belief that gifts and bequests to the church would have the effect of purchase-money for the partial or plenary remission of sins, for abbreviating the duration of the soul's penal purification by purgatorial fires, and for securing a place in paradise, honourable and happy in proportion to the munificence of the bestowment. And neither were such benefactions the result of the principle of an Establishment. They were the natural effect of a principle of selfish and sordid barter, inculcated on deluded souls by selfish and sordid avarice. Thence, to a vast extent, under the domination of the "man of sin," came the wealth of the church; and to this source are our protestant Establishments indebted, by transference, for those descriptions of property to which they boast their vested right; of which they allege, it would be robbery and spoliation to deprive them; but which, if this be true, it is by robbery and spoliation they now enjoy; and which the state, if it had a right to take from the one church, has a much less questionable right to take from the other. If the churches themselves viewed it rightly, they would hasten to rid themselves of what was, to such an amount, the wages of iniquity, and the price of the blood of souls.

But will the true christian community allow the reproach to rest upon them, that the principle of a soul-deluding superstition should be mightier and more productive than the principle of the soul-saving truth?—the spirit of selfishness than the spirit of gratitude?—the spirit of merchandise than the spirit of mercy? Shall the returns for boundless grace be less ample than the sordid payments of a pecuniary merit?—Let the people of God bethink themselves. Let them bring their present liberality to its legitimate tests. Let them have done with the folly of "measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves amongst themselves;" of estimating what they do, or what they give, by the false and invidious standard of such comparisons. The question is, not whether their deeds and gifts will bear to be compared, according to their means, with the deeds and gifts of others; but whether they will bear to be compared with Bible principles and Bible obligations. These are the tests by which they will be estimated at the bar of their Saviour and Judge, in the great day of final assize. Let Christians apply to them now the standard which will be applied to them then. Measure them by the love of God; measure them by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; measure them by the preciousness of your spiritual blessings, and the grandeur of your heavenly hopes, and the depth of your unworthiness of either; measure them by the worth of immortal souls; measure them by the vastness of eternity; measure them by the fearfulness of perdition; measure them by the unbounded and

everlasting joys of God's salvation;—and you will be deeply and abasingly sensible how infinitely every one of these measures goes beyond them! —Let Christians remember, that the God to whom, as creatures, they owe their being, and, as sinners, their redemption, says with authority,—"The silver is mine, and the gold is mine!" Do they sufficiently feel the imperativeness of this claim, and respond with sufficiently grateful generosity to the appeal which it involves? If they did, the whole of my present argument might be spared. There would be, to a greater degree than ever heretofore, an instant and spontaneous opening of all their treasures, to supply, to the full extent of its demands upon them, the treasury of God. Christians and the men of the world belong to two different kingdoms; and there is nothing in which the distinction between them ought to be more marked than in the spirit with which they devote themselves and their substance to the interests of each. There is no lack of pecuniary resources in the church. The lack is only in the principle of their appropriation. Self has too prominent a place. The world has too prominent a place; which is the same thing under another form, the love of the world being only one of the modes of self-indulgence. "The kingdom of God" is not, to the degree in which it ought to be, "sought first." Were its primary claims more imperatively felt, we should soon cease to hear, in regard to any part of our country, of spiritual destitution. The means of eternal life would everywhere abound. By their immediate provision of

these means for all, the subjects of the king would commend their grateful loyalty to their divinely generous Lord. We should no longer see,—what too often presents itself now,—hundreds for self, units for God;—gold for self, silver for Christ;—the house of cedar for self, and the desolate ruin for the Lord of all. The present controversy would arrive at the most desirable of all terminations—in the more unreserved surrender, on the part of Christians, of themselves and their substance to the glory of their common Lord, and the extension, to its promised universality, of his spiritual kingdom; —in the love of Christ overcoming the love of the world, and laying the world at the foot of the cross; —in the more entire dispossession of their hearts of the spirit of worldliness by the expulsive power of the new affections of the gospel;—in the realization, in the soul and in the character of every Christian, of the Apostolic maxim, "To ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST."

# LECTURE VII.

INDEPENDENCE OF PRINCIPLES ON STATISTICS.—TRUE VALUE AND PROPER USE OF THE LATTER.—DR. CHALMERS'S TERRITORIAL SYSTEM.—EVILS OF ESTABLISHMENTS.—CORRUPTION OF THE CHURCH.

In this series of lectures, my object is, as far as my ability reaches, to settle PRINCIPLES. In discussing the sufficiency of the Voluntary Principle, it would be expected by not a few, that I should have entered into some statistical details, illustrative of the nature and extent of the destitution for which a remedy is required; I have purposely avoided this, however, and avoid it still. It is not that there are no sufficient *data* from which a statement sufficiently correct in its general features might be extracted,—how liable soever to exceptions in some of its minuter particulars. It is not that there would be any difficulty in convicting the advocates of Establishments of having placed the question of existing destitution, both in large towns, and throughout the country, in exceedingly deceptive lights; and in few respects more remarkably than in failing to distinguish between the want of church accommodation and of opportunities and means of instruction, and the want of a disposition to use them,—which last is incomparably the most affecting view

of the evil, how much soever overlooked by them in their zeal to make a good case for themselves in their applications to Government. It is not on such grounds,—nor yet from any low estimate of the importance of such investigations in their proper place, that I decline entering on the field of numerical statistics. It is because it is my settled conviction that in my present argument, they would *not* be in their proper place. It is because I cannot admit such details to form any part of the *data* from which principles are to be ascertained, however valuable they may be in determining the degree in which, when ascertained, they require to be brought into exercise, and in directing the course of their practical application.

When from a survey of the condition of the world at the time of our Lord's appearing, you have demonstrated the existing need of a divine revelation, to enlighten its darkness and regenerate its corruption, you have not by such demonstration,—however fearful the facts, and however conclusive your inference,—at all touched the question, whether the scriptures of the New Testament have a well-founded claim to be regarded as having furnished the *desideratum*. The fact of a revelation being needed, does not prove the fact of a revelation having been given. This must rest on evidence of its own. Thus it is in the present instance. When, by a survey of our country, you have made out a case, more or less extensive, of spiritual destitution, and inferred with truth the necessity of *some* remedy being found and applied—the questions, What is the

remedy?—Whence is it to come?—By whom, and in what way, is it to be applied?—are questions entirely independent of the fact of the destitution itself. I could not enter into the details of such destitution without producing, in some minds, the impression that I did consider them as necessary to my argument. This is what I am solicitous to prevent. I hold, that the principle according to which the destitution is to be supplied, ought to be settled on grounds altogether independent of the amount of the destitution itself:—and that the proper use of statistics is, after you have settled your principle, to point out clearly to the church of Christ,—on which the charge of supplying the destitution, be it what it may, must rest,—the standard to which the energy of principle behoves to be brought up, and the way in which it may, most efficiently, be put in exercise. Even if the discovery of the largeness of the field for its necessary operation should, on the first view of it, be startling and appalling, and bring over the heart a feeling of despondency and depression;—yet when the authority of the principle has been ascertained, what becomes the duty of the church,—of the body of the faithful?—what, but to shake off her lethargy, by what causes soever it may have been induced;—to listen, with the promptitude of love and zeal to her Lord's voice—"Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion!"—to gird her loins for the work with a determination and a self-devotedness proportioned to its magnitude;—to set about it with energy, and to prosecute it with perseverance?

Let it not be said that in these remarks I have been undervaluing statistics. Very far from it. They are of essential importance; but not, I must repeat, and maintain my position, for the settlement of *principles*. They may, with all propriety, be used for satisfying the Government of the country, when proceeding on establishment principles, that even on the ground of these there is no existing necessity for particular local or additional endowments; and they are of eminent utility, as has been said, for directing the application of the better principle for which we contend:—but the settlement of the principle itself must be on totally distinct grounds. And I believe that in Scotland, when the royal commission was engaged in fulfilling its important trust, it was usual for dissenting ministers, to enter a protest, previously to their examination, against the legitimacy of the principle on which such a commission had been appointed, and the soundness of any inferences which might be drawn from the results of its investigations, whatever these results might be;—inasmuch as the proof, however clear, of existing destitution, however great, left untouched the question as to the source from which the supply of this destitution ought to come,—which may with truth be called THE question on the present subject.

The great object of Dr. Chalmers in his fourth, fifth, and sixth lectures,—assuming the desirableness (which we are as far as possible from questioning) of effectually pervading the whole country with christian instruction,—is to prove these two posi-

tions :—*that it is only by means of what he denominates a territorial establishment that this can be effectually and thoroughly done,—and that such an establishment necessitates the restriction of the government bounty to one denomination of Christians.*

" It is a most rightful wish," says the Doctor, " on the part of a government, that its people " should be placed under an effectual system of " christian education ; and if this cannot be done " but by means of a territorial Establishment, then " it is shut up unto the necessity of resolving on " such an Establishment, and that it shall be terri- " torial. And again, if this cannot be well done " but by a church of one given denomination, then " it is further bound to select some one denomi- " nation whose ministers it shall entrust with the " high office, and maintain in return for the great " service of teaching morality and religion to the " people of the land."*—The human intellect is, in ten thousand instances, from day to day, the dupe of the evil passions and propensities of the human heart ;—but it occasionally happens too, that a similar illusory power is exerted over it by even the best of our affections. I believe, that the judgment of this excellent and able man is misled by his very benevolence. He desires the well-being—the spiritual well-being—of the community. Having assumed the principle, that the providing of religious instruction for the entire population is a part—and a specially sacred part—of the duty of the civil government, he lays out a plan, and he fills up

* Lectures, pp. 166, 167.

every department of it, not according to the results of past experience, but according to the wishes of a benevolent heart, aided by a sanguine temperament and a vivid imagination. And really he sketches so fine a picture—leaving out, or throwing into back-ground diminutiveness, all that is offensive, and giving fore-ground distinctness and prominence to all that is engaging,—that one scarcely wonders at his getting enamoured of it, for it is in danger of bewitching one's self. What can well be more captivating, than a christian government solicitous for the moral and spiritual interests of all the people;—a complete subdivision of town and country into sections of manageable extent;—a pious, zealous, praying, working minister in every section;—every family visited;—every individual taught;—every soul adequately cared for;—and "a church-going and church-loving people," as the happy result of such superintendence, "handed down to the minister of the next generation!"—And when we add to this scene of moral and spiritual beauty, what meets the eye and the ear, in the picturesque effect of the parish church, and the peaceful parsonage, and the holy resting-place of the dead,

> "Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,"

and "the sound of the church-going bell,"—which, with many more items in the external scenery of religion, have been introduced to aid the fascination,—what is external being carefully made to summon up before the mind all the higher associations of

godliness and virtue, and of personal and domestic order and happiness;—is it any wonder that, piety and benevolence and taste being thus conjointly appealed to, the mind should at times be conscious of a misgiving, and of a rising hesitancy in venturing to assail so fine a combination of natural and spiritual loveliness?

It has, however, *three faults*. In the *first* place, the position from which the sketch is taken is one that is not to be found in the Bible,—or in other words, the system is based on a principle that has no countenance from its authority;—in the *second* place, in all that relates to its spiritual department, it is, to a vast extent, a mere creation of the fancy;—and in the *third* place, all that is really desirable in it is not dependent on the union of church and state, but might and would, in better form, and in larger measure, continue to exist, were that union dissolved.

After the sentences which I have a little ago quoted, Dr. C. naturally proceeds to the question—"On what principle ought the selection to be made?"—namely of "the one denomination whose "ministers are to be entrusted by the state with "the high office, and maintained in return for the "great service, of teaching morality and religion to "the people of the land."—And here he sets out as follows:—"We have already seen, that the prin-"ciple is a very obvious one, and respecting which "even statesmen, if but men of large and liberal "education, should feel no difficulty, on which to "reject that church which would subordinate the "authority of Scripture to the authority of man,—

" or even place the decisions of their own sovereign " pontiff on the same level with the declarations of " the Bible."*—That a church which does this should be " rejected," we readily grant. But I have the serious question to ask—What else than this has Dr. C. himself been all the while doing? Where, while framing his theory, has he laid his New Testament? Does he make any attempt to discover *its* " declarations" on the subject, or to regulate his views and proposals by *them?* Does he take the Apostles as his draughtsmen,—or in sketching his picture, " trace their master-strokes, and draw from their design?" Has his system, even on his own showing, any support whatever but that of *human authority?* It pretends to nothing else:—he rears his whole scheme on the basis of expediency:—he cannot deny that the New-Testament church was originally founded on the principle of love—love to God, to Christ, to Christians, and to mankind,—which is the same thing, how offensive soever the new phraseology may be, with its being founded on the Voluntary Principle:—and yet this principle he repudiates,—loads it with epithets of indignant scorn,—takes the work of supporting and enlarging the church out of the hands in which the authority of Christ originally placed it,—transfers it to other hands,—commits the interests of the church to the world, of the spiritual kingdom to the secular,—setting aside a divine institute, and substituting in its room a human invention:—and yet, while doing all this, he applies terms of repro-

* Lectures, p. 167.

bation and disownment to that church which "subordinates the authority of Scripture to the authority of man!" And he assigns to the statesmen of this world, for their determination, a matter that was long since determined, and of which the determination stands on record, by that very authority with the subordination of which to the authority of man he brands the Romish church as its primary and most prolific crime!—Till the advocates of Establishments apply themselves in earnest to set aside the continued obligation of New-Testament principles and examples,—and succeed in the attempt; we hold ourselves entitled to regard all theories, how plausible soever imagination and eloquence may render them, as baseless and visionary.

This should be enough. It may be noticed further, however, that the territorial scheme, like many others, which look equally fine in the theory, is, in a free country, incapable of reduction to practice. By what means, either in city or in rural parishes, can people be bound to one place of worship, or to one minister? It cannot be, even with the adherents of the endowed denomination itself. In large towns, as every one knows, although there are topical divisions, lined off by certain streets and alleys, yet there is no possibility of a parochial allotment of the population. Every man, woman, and child, will choose his or her minister and place of attendance; so that one congregation may be found consisting of members out of all the parochial localities. This is as it ought to be. It is freedom; and freedom in that department in which, of all

others, the right to it is most sacred and inalienable. "What we want," says Dr. C. "is to place his (the "parish minister's) church in the middle of such a ter- "ritory as we have now specified, and to lay upon him "a task, for the accomplishment of which we would "allow him the labour and perseverance of a whole "life-time; not to fill his church any how, but *to fill* "*this church out of that district.*"—Now this is what cannot by possibility be maintained, either in city or in country. For, suppose a minister to have succeeded in the attempt,—by the labour of a life-time. That life-time ends; he is followed by another. Is it the incumbent duty of the people to like the successor equally well? or, whether they like him or not, to stick by the same walls? Even in country parishes, how often has it happened, that a hete-rodox or an unpopular minister coming in the room of one of an opposite character, has driven the peo-ple off—and very right it should—to the nearest place where their souls would be profitably fed.

But these impracticable points are not the worst of it. There is a principle involved in the scheme of parochial allocation, that is most arrogant and arbi-trary. Many a time does Dr. C. speak of the state "making over" the inhabitants of the "districts and parishes" into which he proposes more minutely to parcel out the country, to their respective ministers, —assigning the entire population of each district to the pastoral superintendence of each minister— "giving him the charge over-head, of one and all of its families." This is the principle of an Esta-blishment. It would be arbitrary, even were there

no dissent;—but in a country where dissenters constitute so very large a proportion of the community, it is more than arbitrary, it is arrogant. It places the dissenting minister both in an inferior grade, and at a disadvantage. The parochial minister is THE minister, while the other is but the "private adventurer," labouring in his vocation by a kind of sufferance, and liable to have many little acts of petty power employed as hindrances to the freedom and success of his work. And for what? Because the other is in the pay of Government,—a spiritual state-officer, with the superintendence assigned him of this portion of its subjects!—The point of honour we cannot concede, without admitting the laws of man to stand superior to the laws of Christ. The dissenting minister holds his place in conformity with the law of the divine Head of the church; the parochial minister holds his by a two-fold infraction of that law. The dissenting minister is there by the suffrages and invitation of his people; and he is supported by his people's free-will offerings. The parochial clergyman is there as the presentee of the crown, of a bishop, of a landed proprietor, of a purchaser of advowsons, or of a town council;—and he has his support, in different ways, from state endowment. Thus he finds his way to his situation through a double breach of the divine law: and on this account he must be regarded—must he?—as standing on higher ground than the man whose position has been attained, and is held, by the sanction of that law! It is not from pique or silly pride we insist on the inversion of this order,—for we plead for

nothing but equality—"one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren:"—it is from jealousy of the authority of the Lord, the church's head. But it is "part and parcel" of a worldly system that the "honour which cometh from man" should have preference to "the honour that cometh from God only." It is really surprising, how Dr. C. and other advocates of the same system speak of the population, as parcelled out and assigned to the superintendence of the state clergy,—and in sections too, of which "each shall be small enough to be overtaken by the attentions of one clergyman," which, of course, proceeds on the assumption that more are not required. Is it wonderful, that dissenters should feel somewhat indignant at this arbitrary appropriation of the entire community to the ministers of the endowed sect? We say, calmly and firmly, that we can acknowledge no such distinction between the ministers of the state church, and the ministers of other denominations. The parishioners of the former consist of those only of the inhabitants of a parish who choose to attend the Established Church;—that is, these are their people, as those who prefer the ministrations of other pastors are theirs. And the minister who officiates in the chapel has the very same right to claim as his people those who attend church, as the minister who officiates in the church has to claim as his those who attend chapel. The distinction between church and chapel, indeed, is the very distinction which ought not to exist. The only legitimate scheme is, to place all on a level,—abolishing all such dis-

tinctions,—putting down dissent by cancelling the monopoly which occasions it, and but for which it would have no existence,—and leaving all, as ministers, not of the state but of the church of Christ, to rouse one another to action by a friendly rivalry in the work of spontaneous spiritual aggression upon the kingdom of the common enemy,—upon the irreligion and vice of the community.

Every one who knows anything of either England or Scotland, knows how large a portion of sanguine fiction there is in the fine picture drawn of a "perfect territorial Establishment,"—how little of sober reality.—We may afterwards touch briefly on the *causes* of failure, and show to what a degree they are inherent in the system, and inseparable from it. For proof of the melancholy *fact*, we need only to point east, west, north, and south, over the length and breadth of our land. And if, in the extent to which the trial of it has been made, it has proved a failure; what ground is there to expect, that the mere extension of the same system would so improve its nature as to alter its results? If a *thin-set* Establishment has not produced good in proportion to its means, why should we anticipate a more favourable issue from one, in Dr. C.'s phrase, "sufficiently *thick-set?*" *Majus et minus non variant speciem.* The Doctor appears sensible of this, and adverts to one of the grand difficulties of his favourite speculation, in these terms;—"It is true that, though we can "create the right machinery, we cannot create the "right men; and that without these the machinery "may either be ill-worked, or not worked at all—and

"so be the instrument of evil instead of good."* Now, we repeat our denial that the machinery *is* right. It is not constructed upon Bible principles. It wants the true spiritual mechanism of the apostolic church. And hence, in a great degree, arises the "difficulty" of which Dr. C. avows himself "quite sensible"—the "*want of men.*" An Establishment must have its state and lay patronage, and if Dr. C. is extravagantly sanguine in estimating the results of his clerical superintendence of diminished and multiplied parishes, he is still more so, when he calculates on the rectification of all the abuses of this patronage,—on the production of its pure and well-principled exercise,—from being able to present "a few specimens of the power and fruitfulness that lie in the territorial cultivation." His knowledge of human nature might well have repressed such anticipations, and drawn from his heart a sigh over their hopelessness. Alas! there is too great a complication of political ends,—too many secular and worldly considerations,—too many personal and relative interests,—too numerous a variety of swaying and corrupting motives,—and in the minds of the men of this world, too deep-seated a spirit of earthliness and hostility to spiritual and vital godliness,—to warrant any other feeling in the case than one of hopeless despondency. And indeed, the law of patronage being itself a flagrant outrage on the institutions of Jesus Christ,—a spoliation of the covenanted rights of his people,—an alienation and prostitution of a spiritual privilege belonging to the

* Lectures, p. 156.

subjects of his spiritual kingdom,—there can no blessing, on any scriptural ground, be expected on the system with which this simoniacal sacrilege is incorporated.

I have said that all that is truly good in the system,—all, I mean, that is really conducive to the spread of christian knowledge and of the influence of christian principle, amongst the portion of the population which, whether wilfully or from necessity, continues destitute of spiritual instruction and oversight,—may be effected, and effected to better purpose, because more scripturally, without it. Nothing can be more uncandid and more false, than to speak of the Voluntary Principle as if it were not an aggressive one; as if it were a principle that provided for self, but went no further;—furnishing the ordinances of religion for those who are actuated by it, but taking no charge of others;—keeping the vineyard, but leaving the "outfield" to fruitless desolation, or the luxuriance of weeds and poisons. It has been aggressive from the beginning, as Dr. C. himself beautifully shows; and it requires only to have its slumbering energies thoroughly awakened, and called into action, to evince now, as it did at first, the amount of its capabilities. Dr. C. draws a strong and vivid picture of the almost universally kind reception which a parish minister may, from experience, anticipate, in his visits of official superintendence and christian mercy. This is a favourite theme. He expatiates on it with a benevolent delight, for which we give him all credit, although we think he is at times tempted on by the very pleasure

he feels, to the confines at least of Utopia. But supposing the description true in its full extent, we have to ask,—Does it apply exclusively to a *parish* minister? Is it not at least as true of other ministers, as of them? And is it not true too of the visits of mercy paid for similar ends, by missionaries, by christian instruction agents, by private Christians? Nay, is there not even a likelihood of a reception still more grateful, and of a result still more favourable, when there is absent from the minds of those visited the impression of mere officiality in the attentions shown them; and when there is the contrary impression, that they are dictated by a disinterested spirit of kindness and of real concern for their well-being? The spontaneous efforts of christian love possess, in this respect, a pre-eminent advantage. Were all ministers, and all true believers, on the ground of the benevolence of their common Christianity, carrying out, as they ought to do, in their respective spheres, and according to their respective abilities, the system of kind and prudent aggression,—these efforts, being divested of every possible association with state pay and state politics, would be the more cheerfully welcomed, and the more promising of success. It is not a state-endowment, but the spontaneous impulses of christian charity, by which the way will be most effectually opened to the hearts of the people whom we wish to benefit. I appeal to the experience of our city and town missions, and of our christian instruction agencies, institutions so admirably adapted to the existing exigencies; respecting which

our only wonder is, as it has been respecting others, that they were not sooner thought of; and which require only to be fostered and extended sufficiently by christian liberality, to meet those exigencies as effectually as they can be met by human means. Setting aside, on the grounds stated by Dr. C., as well as on others, the idea of a *sectarian territorial partition*, as absurd in its principle, and ludicrous in its results, mark what follows. Although he many a time speaks of the Government "making over" the entire population of each city district or country parish to the supervision of the state-paid minister, and appears sensible of no difficulty in this, yet in regard to such a partition as has just been adverted to, he says:—"It is quite obvious that the "people cannot thus be made over, at the arbitrary "will either of civil or ecclesiastical superiors,— "cannot thus be made over, in sections of con- "tinuous households, to this one or that other "denomination, just according to the locality in "which they happen to reside. And if, to avoid "this inconvenience, each shall be left to choose "their own denomination, and Government to "endow all without respect to the territorial "principle,—then on this principle all who choose "to be methodists may have their minister sup- "ported by the state; and all who choose to be "presbyterians may have theirs; and all who "choose to be episcopalians may have theirs; and "all who choose to be baptists, or independents, "or any other sect, that is comprehended within "the limits of scriptural and evangelical pro-

" testantism, may have theirs. But what, in the " mean time, becomes of that number, who re- " linquish, or never acquired the habits of church- " going, and choose to be nothing at all,—a " number altogether left by this system without " guardianship and without observation; and " who are, therefore, sure to increase every year, " and that either with or without an increase of " population?"*—Granting him the truth of his premises, what are we to make of such conclusions as these questions involve? Does it indeed follow, that, because there are "no *territorial* ministers to look after these, or take any charge of them," they must necessarily be "without guardianship and without observation"—neglected, and left to wander, in the darkness of ignorance, to perdition? Why should all besides the "hearers of a minister's own sect" be represented as lying "beyond any scope or cognizance of his?" Why should he speak of the system of Voluntaryism as "wielding no aggressive influence, by which either to restrain or to recover them?" How wonderful the degree to which a *party* view of a subject will narrow the mind of even men most eminent in intellect! What! is it come to this? Is the only consideration on which a christian man, or a christian minister, will regard fellow-sinners as coming "within any scope or cognizance of his," their being put under that cognizance *by a state-appointment?* Is it not greatly to be feared, that the minister who assumes the cognizance on no higher grounds than

* Lectures, pp. 163, 164.

this, will be found but poorly qualified for the charge, and miserably deficient in the fulfilment of its functions? and is not the very cause thus unwittingly suggested of the actually prevailing inefficiency, sadly proved by so astounding an array of facts as might be collected from the length and breadth of our land? Oh! is there no sympathy in the church of God for perishing souls? Is there no one to "look after them"—no one to care for them, unless they are allotted by the civil rulers to the superintendence of state-paid overseers? Has not God—has not the glorified Redeemer—given it in charge to all his people, and specially to all his servants, that "the gospel be preached to every creature?" If even a heathen moralist could say that, as a man, he had an interest in every thing human,—shall the christian minister be supposed to look on the perishing around him, with the heartless question of the first murderer, "Am I my brother's keeper?" unless he happens to be appointed such a keeper by the authority of an act of parliament? It is the incumbent and sacred duty of every individual Christian,—of every minister of Christ,—and of every "congregation of faithful men," to see to the diffusion of truth and of its influence around them. The individual should regard it as one of the ends of his conversion,—the public instructor, as one of the ends of his being "put into the ministry,"—and the congregation as one of the ends of its social constitution. The failure of attention to this, is a sin of omission, of which the heinousness is far from light; and it is a loss of the

richest pleasure of which the believing soul can be the seat—a participation in the joy of heaven over sinners brought to repentance. I deny not that there is ground to complain of the "languor of christian charity, among those people who should be willing to give it (christian instruction) on behalf of others, "without money and without price." But I cannot forget the fact, that this very languor has been induced, in no small degree, by the soporific of an Establishment. It is the hand of the state that has strewed the poppies over the church. The Voluntary Principle is now but awaking from its long slumbers. It may be some little time before its eyes are thoroughly opened, and its energies thoroughly recovered. It may be some little time before the last filaments be dissevered of those "grave-clothes" by which it has been "bound hand and foot," in the "garnished sepulchre" of state-endowments, and ere it go forth in all its pristine freedom and power. But it has awaked. It is opening its eyes; it is breaking its bands; it is asserting its liberty; it is putting on its strength. Those eyes have looked abroad on the destitution of perishing thousands; and the sight has drawn from them the "silent flood" of pity; and the "eye has affected the heart," and kindled there—or revived from its sinking embers—the fire of love and zeal. What remains, in order to complete the preparation for the universal diffusion of christian knowledge in our country, and for the speedy evangelization of the world, is the recognition, on the part of our church friends, of the primitive principle; and, from their experience

of the luxury of its exercise, their bursting the bond of state-alliance, and with a fearless confidence in their Lord, committing his own cause to his own hands and those of his own spiritual subjects, and as such, uniting, heart and soul, with their brethren of other denominations,—"all one in Christ Jesus,"—in advancing to the uttermost the common interests of that cause,—rescuing the ark of God from the unhallowed guardianship to which they have hitherto committed it, and, with holy exultation, taking it on their own shoulders, and bearing it to its own place.

Of the efficiency of the aggressive system under the operation of the Voluntary Principle, I was struck with an instance recorded in the Life of Wilberforce, in a letter from himself to Wm. Hey, Esq. Nov. 19, 1798:—"I am meditating a visit to the Archbishop, to press again the proposition you recommended, of authorizing the building chapels of ease, to fall in to the mother-church, after a term of years. The increase of dissenting chapels, wherever the dissenters have entered on their plan of village-preaching, is beyond measure great; in one year, I think, ninety in the diocese of London, and near fifty in that of Sarum."* Assuming the correctness of this statement, it is a very instructive one; and instructive in one point of view especially, in which I am anxious to press it upon your attention. The increase stated is represented as having taken place in consequence of the dissenters having "*entered on their plan of village preaching.*" The lesson is, that *village preaching* should

* Life of Wilberforce, p. 319.

be the precursor and attendant of village *chapel-building*. This is a very different thing from a mere stone-and-lime mania. I designate it thus, when the erection of places of worship is unassociated with the active operation of the system of home missions and domiciliary visitation. Without this, what better is it than a mania? In those cities and towns where there are already thousands of unoccupied sittings, and of these by far the larger proportion of the inferior and cheaper class, it is so self-evidently preposterous, that one cannot but deeply regret that liberality so exemplary as that which our church friends have evinced in this department, should not have been applied with more discretion, and greater likelihood of a favourable result. If in Scotland, for example, of the 200,000*l.* raised by voluntary subscription for the building of churches, there had, in the first instance, been a liberal outlay in the institution and maintenance of an efficient system of missionary labour, both in town and country, and this had been accompanied and followed by the provision of church accommodation in proportion as, by the divine blessing, such means were crowned with success, and so created a demand for it,—this would have been surely a much more reasonable course; and who can tell what an amount of real benefit might have been the result? And even in cities, where, according to the ordinary ratio of estimate, there is actual deficiency, and that, it may be, to a large amount,—while the plan of building would not, by any means, be so marked by preposterousness,—and while, in not a few

cases, the setting-down of a place of worship might be the means of collecting a congregation from the multitudes who had been without the opportunity, except by travelling to some distance, of finding accommodation; yet still, there are thousands and tens of thousands who must be reached by other means than the mere erection of a house, and the issuing of a proclamation of room. This might only be like "calling spirits from the vasty deep,"—leaving the question still to be asked—"But canst thou make them come when thou dost call for them?" For the outcast multitudes of whom I speak, and of whose case the most appalling feature is their disinclination to avail themselves of provided means, there is not only nothing *like* the aggressive system,—there is nothing *but* that system by which anything effective can be accomplished. They must be assailed by an agency suited to the diversity of their characters and conditions,—but all actuated by the conviction of the omnipotence of love. This is the only legitimate principle in religious effort; and the only principle that gives any promise of success. There are few human bosoms that are thoroughly *love-proof;* few that are beyond being touched by the power of disinterested kindness; and its influence is often the greater, in proportion to the rarity with which the wretched outcasts of human society experience it. "Drawing with the cords of love" is God's way; it must be ours. There must be "line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept, precept upon precept"—persevered in amidst all discouragements, even amidst the "hope deferred

which maketh the heart sick." And when we have done our utmost, there will still be multitudes on whom no impression can be made, to whom the God of mercy will still have reason to say—"All day long have I stretched out my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people!" But Oh! let Christians see to it, that these multitudes have at least the means of knowledge and salvation;—that they live not and die not unwarned of their danger, unapprised of the way of escape! Let the church wash its hands clean of the world's blood.

What Mr. Wilberforce mentions, of the remarkable success attending the evangelizing efforts of dissenters forty years ago, appears at that time to have excited the jealousy of the church, and of the statesmen of the day on the church's behalf. It was in the following year (1799) that certain restrictive measures were proposed, respecting which that good man thus writes:—"Some check is wished to be imposed on the indiscriminate right of preaching, which, as you perhaps know, has lately been exercised to a much greater extent than ever before. I have not yet thought on this difficult subject for one quarter of an hour. But the only expedients which have been suggested, seem to me, on the first view, strongly objectionable;—*e. g.* making the registration of conventicles not a matter of course, but empowering the magistrate to grant or withhold licences:"—and a few months later—"Have I told you before (but do not speak of it) that from alarm at the increasing assiduity of the itinerant home missionaries, who, many of them the most illiterate

of men, take out licences as dissenting teachers, and thus go about protected by the Toleration Act,—some measures are in contemplation, for limiting the privileges enjoyed under it? I saw this storm brewing in the spring, and warned Pitt against any infringement of perfect toleration, telling him that the principles to be adhered to were publicity and responsibility. To whom can the discretionary power of judging what teachers are duly qualified, be justly committed? I dread these gathering clouds," &c.—Such is the way in which Government, under the secret or avowed influence of a chartered church, has too often been disposed to treat the aggressive system, when operating according to its only legitimate, because only scriptural form, the form of spontaneous christian zeal. Well might Mr. Wilberforce ask—"To whom can the discretionary power of judging what teachers are duly qualified, be justly committed?" The right to judge of such qualifications lies nowhere but in the voluntary arrangements of the particular religious communions with which the preachers are connected. The Established Church has its own canons on this subject. The various bodies of dissenters have theirs, according to the views which they respectively entertain of what either scripture or expediency requires. And every dissenting denomination has an equally valid right,—although not the same power,—to interfere with the canons of the Established Church, as that church has to interfere with theirs.—Whether in consequence of the remonstrances of Mr. Wilberforce and others, or from whatever cause,

the measures alluded to, which are said to have been more stringent than even the provisions of Lord Sidmouth's Bill in 1809, were relinquished without being brought before parliament. But the case affords an instructive exemplification of the consequences of allowing the judgment of qualifications for religious teaching to rest with a prime minister, —either when he thinks for himself, or when he is swayed by ecclesiastical counsel. When Mr. Gladstone speaks of competency of character in the "governing body," to choose a religion for the people, and rightly to apply the external means of its propagation, it might not unreasonably have been expected, that religion itself—the personal knowledge of its principles and the personal experience of its power,—should find a place amongst the ingredients which constitute this competency. But he knew well, that to make such a qualification necessary would either leave us without a government, or expose us to even greater hypocrisy by far than already exists. Nothing of the kind is insisted on. He regards those "abilities superior to the average" by which particular men are "marked out as qualified to lead in civil society, and to discharge political functions," as, at the same time, constituting the "competency in the governors to choose in matters of religion better than the average of the people will do it for themselves, and, commensurate exactly with that superiority, an obligation to exercise that choice, and, as it were, advise the people to accept and follow that religion which the governing body has adopted as the best." Now, whatever

may be thought of his political principles and ministerial measures, few men will question, I presume, the *talents* of William Pitt. In his case, therefore, we have a striking illustration, how little confidence is to be placed in mere talent,—mere superior education and ability,—as conferring competency to choose the best religion for the people! "I lost no time," says Mr. W., "in conferring with Mr. Pitt on the subject; but he had been strongly biased in favour of the measure, by Bishop Pretyman, on whom I urged in vain the serious consequences that must infallibly ensue. We spent some hours together; and I confess I never knew till then, how deep a prejudice his mind had conceived against the class of clergy to whom he knew me to be attached. (Mr. Pitt called them rascals.) It was in vain I mentioned to him Mr. Robinson of Leicester, Mr. Richardson of York, Mr. Milner of Hull, and Mr. Atkinson of Leeds. He thought ill of their moral character; and it clearly appeared that the prejudice arose out of the confidence he reposed in the Bishop of Lincoln. From this association of the evangelical clergy with the dissenters, there is reason to suspect that the restriction of religious liberty, if carried against dissenters, would have been introduced into the pale of the Establishment."—There was more here, then, than hostility to dissent; there was rooted antipathy to the doctrines of grace, and to the men who preached them;—and the restriction was thus intended to be imposed on the diffusion of those doctrines which are regarded by the great mass of dissenters, and by the evangelical section of the

established clergy, as constituting the very essential elements of christian truth. Surely Mr. Gladstone, when he ventured to repose so much confidence in mere intellectual eminence, how highly soever cultivated, forgot Him who said,—"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes!" With qualifications for religious teaching, the civil magistrate has, legitimately, nothing to do. If a man be found taking advantage of his calling, whether self-assumed or by whomsoever conferred, to sow the seeds of sedition and rebellion, let him be taken up on civil grounds, and proceeded against accordingly. But there must be no tampering with the unfettered freedom of religion,—whether that freedom adopt the medium of preaching or of the press. If fools will preach and print,—and other fools will hear and read them, —let them have their will. To persecute them is only to give them a notoriety and an influence they would not otherwise attain. And if abler men will preach and print what is contrary to the truth of God,—leave that truth to defend itself. Let its champions take the field with their appropriate weapons, the weapons of fair and temperate argument, and the only sword which reason and revelation justify—"the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." All that they demand is an open field, and no favour. And especially they demand, that error shall not have the advantage of civil pains and penalties, to recommend it to sympathy, to ensure its diffusion, and to multiply its friends.

When Dr. C. is exposing the detrimental results of a division of the country according to sects, he says that, in that case, "the business of the paid instructor will, just as it happens, be to make baptists of all, or methodists of all, or episcopalians of all, or presbyterians of all." Such language clearly implies, that "the business of the paid instructor," according to the actually existing system, is to make *churchmen* of all, — episcopalian churchmen in England, and presbyterian churchmen in Scotland. This, it seems, is what the paid instructor, in return for his pay, is bound, to the utmost of his power, to do; and this is what dissenters of all denominations are bound to pay him for doing! Baptists, independents, seceders, and all the rest, to pay for hired teachers, whose incumbent duty is to make episcopalians, or presbyterians, and, at all events, churchmen, of the whole population! Surely in a country where this can be regarded as consistent with liberty of conscience, and with "even-handed justice," there is yet a good deal to be learned both of the principles of freedom and of the obligations of morality; and a good deal yet to be done, to "establish its throne in righteousness."

It will not do to set aside all such charges of injustice and invasion of the rights of conscience, on the ground formerly adverted to, of making light of the differences by which the various christian sects in our land are separated into their respective communions. It is easy to speak of "*nugæ triviales*," —of "sectaries keeping aloof from the church on considerations that are confessedly insignificant and

paltry." Dissenters, holding the principle that whatever their Master has thought it worth his while to command, it must be worth their while to obey, cannot in conscience so regard them;—and, apart from all differences about the constitution and government of the church,—differences which subsist among themselves, they regard the connexion itself of the church with the state, as involving in it such views of the kingdom of Christ, as are essentially at variance with its spiritual character, subversive of its independence, and most inimical to its best and highest interests. It is impossible for them to treat such points with indifference. Dr. C. would have the various bodies of dissenters make a sacrifice of those minor considerations of which his own estimate is so light, for the great general good. We can only say for them,—that so they would, if they held the same conviction which he (conscientiously we are fully persuaded) avows in these terms:—"We want not to overbear the con-"sciences of dissenters; but, if possible, to disarm "their hostility to an institute, of which, we "honestly believe, that its overthrow would be tanta-"mount to the surrender, in its great bulk and body, "of the Christianity of our nation." But we hold no such belief. We regard the Establishment as a *human institution*. Such it is admitted by its advocates to be. Dr. C. pleads for his territorial system no divine origin, no Bible authority. He does not pretend to find it in the New Testament, amongst the prescriptions of the Apostles of Jesus Christ. He regards it in no higher light than as

an admirable device of uninspired benevolence and wisdom. Now, for ouselves, we *cannot* believe that any merely human system can really bind up in it the religion of a people. We think more reverentially of the wisdom of the church's Head. We conceive it to be an unworthy reflection on that wisdom, that the provision made by it for the maintenance of his cause should have been so insecure, that, without the addition of an entirely human invention,—nay, of a constitution by which his own, in some of its essential elements, is set aside,—the Christianity of a country could not be kept up, but must, "in its great bulk and body, be surrendered."

Let it, moreover, be recollected that *we* plead for a constitution which we believe to be *divine;* while Dr. C. pleads for one which he regards as only *human.* Yet he would fain persuade us, that it would be an act of duty and of patriotism on our part, to cease our opposition, and to make a sacrifice of aught that we may consider ourselves entitled to claim, for the sake of the great ends which he conceives his territorial plan alone competent to effect. But with our principles, how can we? Whether is it more reasonable, that we should sacrifice the divine for the human, or that Dr. C. should sacrifice the human for the divine? If he will assure us, that he considers the plan for which he pleads as more than a human device,—as having the stamp of divinity; then we shall be on equal ground. Neither of us can yield what we conscientiously believe to be from God. But if he does not maintain its "divine right," then, I repeat, we conceive it, in all

reason, to be him that should give way; inasmuch as *his* conscience can never be so strongly bound by what he regards as *human*, as *ours* is by what we regard as *divine*.

In what remains of this lecture, I shall look at Establishments as they have affected, and are calculated to affect the *purity* of the church; the illustration of which topic, as well as of others in next lecture, may serve to show how little reason there is for the dread expressed, that their overthrow would be "tantamount to the surrender, in its great bulk and body, of the Christianity of our nation."—The *purity* of the church, to which I now proceed, is a point of primary consequence. The church is a spiritual community. It properly consists of all that "love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," and evince their faith and love by "walking in newness of life." Such were the materials of which, as the inscriptions of the apostolic epistles, the laws regarding discipline, and the entire tenor of the New Testament, concur to show, it was the will of Christ that his visible church should consist. The gospel, accompanied with the influences of the Spirit of God, was designed to quicken the spiritually dead, and collect those thus regenerated into an association distinct from the world and from every worldly institution. The intrusion, or admission, into this association, of persons who were still "of the world," and gave no satisfactory evidence of conversion to God, was, to the extent to which it took place, a corruption of the spiritual community; or, as Paul

denominates it, a "defiling of the temple of God." And any passages of Scripture that have been cited in palliation and in defence of such corruption, might be shown to be perverted from their true meaning, and, when so perverted, to prove nothing by proving too much—far more than any by whom they are adduced would for a moment maintain,—to set the sacred writers against themselves, and to be palpably at variance with every reasonable and common-sense view of the case. Whatever amalgamates this community with the world, deteriorates its character, sullies its glory, dishonours its Head, defeats its purposes, and spreads delusion and ruin, instead of saving virtue, amongst mankind. Of the tendency of all systems that are placed under human management to degeneracy, I am well aware; all being good as it comes from God, and all liable to deterioration in the hands of men. Of the amount of corruption which, from this cause, even in Apostolic times, found its way into the church, I am equally aware; nor less so of the increase of that corruption, both in extent and variety, in the immediately subsequent ages. On this subject there are extremes on both sides, of which the advocates and the opponents of Establishments are, respectively, in danger;—the former being naturally inclined to multiply and aggravate the evils of the church during the first three centuries, in order to mitigate the force of the argument against Establishments from the tide of worldliness that set in and overflowed it in its whole extent, from the time of its being taken under imperial patronage; while

the latter are in danger of under-rating the real amount of previous corruption, and of speaking in too unqualified terms, as if the *origination* of the church's declension and defilement had its date in the days of Constantine. This is one of the tendencies of controversy,—the desire to make a strong case, and to put it in a strong light. But there is no need, on our part, for going one step beyond admitted facts. To trace the history of those corruptions which, from a variety of principles in the remaining depravity of the heart,—from ambition, avarice, superstition, the vanity of wisdom, and the pride of self-righteousness,—crept into the church, and, although amidst a large amount of remaining excellence and separation from the world, deformed its primitive loveliness, would require much more time than can now be spared for it. It is not at all necessary to my argument. To prove the tendency of Establishments to corrupt the church, we do not require to prove that there was no corruption in it before. It is enough, that corruption of new kinds, and in a larger amount and variety than ever, then found admission. And on this point, so far as I am aware, there are not two opinions. Allow me to quote a few authorities,—and authorities such as no churchman will be disposed to controvert. From Mosheim I might quote many passages; one must suffice;—it is a kind of summing-up of previous details:—"When we cast an eye towards the lives and morals of Christians at this time, we find, as formerly, a mixture of good and evil; some eminent for their piety, others infamous for their crimes.

The number, however, of immoral and unworthy Christians began so to increase, that the examples of real piety and virtue became extremely rare. When the terrors of persecution were totally dispelled; when the church, secured from the efforts of its enemies, enjoyed the sweets of prosperity and peace; when most of the bishops exhibited to their flocks the contagious examples of arrogance, luxury, effeminacy, animosity, and strife, with other vices too numerous to mention; when the inferior rulers and doctors of the church fell into a slothful and opprobrious negligence of the duties of their respective stations, and employed in vain wranglings and idle disputes that zeal and attention that were due to the culture of piety and to the instruction of their people; and when (to complete the enormity of this horrid detail), multitudes were drawn into the profession of Christianity, not by the power of conviction and argument, but by the prospect of gain and the fear of punishment:—then it was, indeed, no wonder that the church was contaminated by shoals of profligate Christians, and that the virtuous few were, in a manner, oppressed and overwhelmed by the superior numbers of the wicked and licentious. It is true, that the same rigorous penitence which had taken place before Constantine the Great, continued now in full force against flagrant transgressors; but when the reign of corruption becomes universal, the vigour of the laws yields to its sway, and a weak execution defeats the purposes of the most salutary discipline. Such was now unhappily the case; the age was sinking daily

from one period of corruption to another; the great and the powerful sinned with impunity, and the obscure and the indigent felt alone the severity of the laws."* Dr. Campbell, in his Lectures on Ecclesiastical History, says incidentally, but in terms of correspondent import—"It had been chiefly in the century immediately preceding, when the christian religion was legally established as the religion of the empire, and when, through the concurrence of secular with spiritual motives, there came to be an immense accession of people to the church, that there was a necessity for building so great a number of chapels, or *tituli*, as in the Latin churches they were, for distinction's sake, at first denominated."† The specified nature of the motives by which this "immense accession of people" was produced, gives us a sufficiently clear idea of what Dr. Campbell thought of its character. The larger such an accession, the greater the evil. What was gained in numbers was more than lost in purity. It was an immense accession of earthliness and corruption, and thus an immense deterioration of a spiritual community. The addition was decay, the strength weakness, the glory shame.—"Constantine's own liberality, and that of his successors," says Mr. Hallam, "set an example which did not want imitators. Passing rapidly from a state of distress and persecution to the summit of prosperity, the church degenerated as rapidly from her ancient purity, and forfeited the respect of future ages in

* Vol. I. cent. iv. part ii.

† Vol. I. pp. 258, 259.

the same proportion as she acquired the blind veneration of her own. Covetousness especially became almost a characteristic vice."*—The following is from Archdeacon Woodhouse, in his work on the Apocalypse, and is adopted by Mr. Cunningham of Lainshaw, who was himself, at the time, a churchman:—"The history of this period," says he, "fairly related, informs us, that, although the christian church was delivered from persecution, and advanced in worldly consideration and power, yet did it acquire no *real* accession of worth, dignity, or exaltation, by its connexion with the imperial throne. Nay, from that very time its degeneracy and corruption are most indubitably to be dated. From that period, worldly power and riches became the objects of its leaders, not purity and virtue. Many entered the christian church, and obtained its honours and dignities, by base dissimulation of their principles, to please the emperor, and recommend themselves to his favour; and the consequent extension of the christian religion among the heathen nations was, as Mosheim observes, *in name, not in reality.*"—I might multiply such references. I satisfy myself with one more;—it is from Dr. Keith's "Signs of the Times:"—"The elevation of Constantine to the throne, and his conversion to Christianity, gave outward peace to the church. To human view the help seemed great. But as many formerly had become genuine converts, on witnessing the integrity of saints, conjoined with the intrepidity of martyrs, the religion of the court became

* Middle Ages, vol. ii. pp. 199, 200.

then the lure to the formal and false profession of a holy faith:"—and, referring to the early and severe persecutions of the church, he says—"But after a long time of fiery trial, and still without any change in the government of Rome, they who had been afflicted long were '*holpen with a little help;*' and hypocrisy and worldly-mindedness began to be associated with the profession of the Gospel. '*Many clave to them with flatteries,*' when a smile from a throne, in lieu of the prospect of a cross, awaited the convert to the christian faith. But *little* in a spiritual sense was the help which the conversion of the emperor of Rome conferred on the cause of the Cross. The truth was not greatly aided by nominal converts, or by worldly men. The spirit of the world was gradually infused into the church, which became corrupted by prosperity, as previously it had been purified by tribulation."* And in similar terms of reprobation, he proceeds to descant on the dominant ascendency, the ambition, the avarice, the vices, of the hierarchy.

And was this, then, the accomplishment of one of God's gracious promises to his church?—the verification of an assurance of blessing?—They must have extraordinary notions of divine promise and divine blessing, who venture to represent it in such a light. The consequences thus briefly summed up are dismal facts in the faithful page of history;—and they are such as, from the nature of the event with which they stand associated, any ordinary sagacity might reasonably have anticipated. It is truly

* Vol. I. pp. 77, 80.

astonishing how Dr. C., with the facts of history and the concurrent judgment of all writers relative to that period, before him, could express himself as follows:—"We know that contemporaneously with "this establishment of the christian religion in the "days of Constantine, there was, not the birth, but "the progress, of a great and general corruption, "which had its commencement in other causes, two "centuries before. There is nothing in the mere "distribution of ecclesiastical labourers over the "territory of the Roman empire, each working in "his proper vocation, and in return for a right and "regulated income;—there is nothing in such an "economy that can at all account for that fearful "degeneracy of the church which began even in "the first century, and which the establishment "that took place early in the fourth did not origi-"nate, and, as it appears from the actual history, "*could not arrest.*"*—"Could not arrest!"—and is it really possible, that this good and able man should regard that establishment as having had a *tendency* to arrest it?—nay, not a tendency merely, but a tendency so strong as to render the fact of its having been overcome a specially signal display of the irresistibleness of the power of corruption! If so, we can only express our amazement at the influence of attachment to a favourite theory, in filming the mental vision to the discernment of even the most elementary principles of moral cause and effect. When inducements came to be inverted,—what had previously operated to discourage the

* Lectures, p. 16.

profession of the christian faith now holding out a temptation to it,—what before had been a barrier, keeping out of the church, becoming now a lure to enter it,—secular honours and advantages being now found *in* the church instead of *out of it*, and the favour rather than the fear of man being now the snare; how could it be otherwise than that the church should be inundated with the world?—that alterations in her simple primitive constitution should be felt more than ever necessary, in accommodation to the various existing forms of national government?—that profession without principle,—form without power,—the ceremonial and etiquette of religion, without the "hidden man of the heart,"—and, in a word, all the diversities of nominal Christianity, without its life and spirit,—should abound? and should abound, not only without the vitality of true spiritual religion, but amidst the indulgence of every worldly and vicious affection? And as the same causes, operating in the same circumstances, will ever produce the same effects,—what was the case of old is the case still. The native and necessary result of all Establishments is,—an immensity of merely nominal Christianity, and the consequent prevalence of false confidence and self-deception. Other evils may be found, some in one Establishment, and some in another; but this, from their generic nature, is common to all. They necessarily operate as a bounty on simulation,—a premium on conformity. By nationalizing the name and profession of Christianity, they destroy, to an incalculable extent, its essential spirituality and its personal dis-

tinctiveness. — The designation of "Christians," when first given to "the disciples" at Antioch, was one which expressed separation from the world by the faith of Christ's doctrines, subjection to Christ's will, imitation of Christ's example, and devotedness to Christ's service and honour; — but Establishments have reduced it to a mere term in geography, a territorial distinction, under which entire communities are embraced, containing individuals of all imaginable varieties, both of creed and character, and of no-creed and no-character, — all christian, and all jealous of the designation too, merely because born and resident within certain geographical boundaries, and subjects of what is, by courtesy, called a christian government. This is a source of wide-spreading delusion; a poisonous fountain, from which there flow streams of spiritual death over the length and breadth of our land; and streams which, in different ways, carry their deleterious influence to the very ends of the earth.—This corruption of the church of God is inherent in the system. It begins with the throne. The king of Great Britain is the acknowledged head on earth of the English church, and he presides, in person or by his representative, in the supreme court of the Scottish. Whatever, therefore, may be his private sentiments regarding episcopacy or presbyterianism, he must, it is presumed, be recognised officially as a member of both; and he is so, independently of all considerations of personal character. Let him, as a man, be the very impersonation of profligacy, this does not cancel his royal relation to the church, in virtue of which

he swears his adherence to her interests, and participates in her ordinances. And yet, have there not been monarchs who have swayed the sceptre of these realms, against whom the church, if she had done her duty, instead of owning headship, or membership, or right of presence in her courts, would have uttered in a voice of thunder the sentence of personal excommunication,—and to whom the ministration of the sacred symbols of the Redeemer's body and blood has been an act of the most sacrilegious profanation on the part of the administrator,—and on the part of the receiver, the very touch of them pollution? I am speaking for God; and therefore I speak boldly, and without reserve. I do not wish to wrong my Scottish brethren. If I speak in ignorance, let me be corrected. But on the supposition that such a profligate prince were visiting Scotland, and, when there, were so far to relax his episcopalian predilections and scruples (if he had any) as to express a wish to put honour upon his northern Establishment, by partaking of the sacrament according to its instituted forms,—what would be done? Would not *consistency* require the acceptance of the honour,—the disgraceful honour,—in the admission to the chief place at the Lord's table of one who, by his proxy, occupies the throne, under which sits the ecclesiastical moderator, in the supreme assembly of the church? Would there be principle enough to say *No?* If there were, where would be the consistency? And if the consistency were maintained, where would be the principle? If he is in the assembly, why should he

not be at the Lord's table?—and if he cannot be at the Lord's table, why is he in the assembly? I trust there is no one, lay or clerical, in the Scottish church, who will attempt to break the horns of the dilemma with the distinction between the *king* and the *man*. A king as such, is a nonentity in the church of Christ; and to a participation in her ordinances, no man on earth, high or low, is entitled, save those who have been "washed from their sins in his blood, and made kings and priests unto God."

There is thus corruption in the system at the very top of the scale; and although, happily, the abrogation of those infamous statutes, the Corporation and Test Acts, has saved the country from a vast amount of *official* profanation of sacred things, yet the corrupting principle spreads its taint downward, through all the grades of the aristocracy, to its very lowest point.—What is the national religion for which Mr. Gladstone pleads? His work, in various parts of it, gives indications of a spirit of piety which it were most desirable to see cleared of the obscuring, damping, depressing mists of the system he advocates. What, I say, is his national religion? It is, as noticed in our first lecture, the religion of the "governing body:"—this governing body is, by a fiction, regarded as a person:—and the religion and conscience of this fictitious person, this complex individual, is the religion and conscience of the state; this impersonation of the ruling power being "bound in its capacity as such, to profess and maintain a religion according to its con-

science." What can this politico-personal religion be? A number of *real* persons go to make up this *fictitious* person. The question, therefore, forces itself upon us—What is the religion of these *real* persons, taken in their proper *bonâ fide* individuality? Have they any at all? If they have not, what will the religion be of the *corporate person* which they collectively constitute? Can that be in the whole which is in none of the parts? Must not the religion itself be as much a fiction, as the complex representative person is? It is incumbent, it seems, on this person to "*profess a religion.*" But what else is this than making dissimulation an official duty? Profession is not principle;—profession without principle is hypocrisy;—hypocrisy can, in no case, be either pleasing to God or profitable to man; and any influence it can exert must be the very reverse of salutary. And the best of it is, that this "governing body,"—this complex unit,—this incorporated personal representative of the nation's religion, and character, and will,—this religious composite of irreligious ingredients,—requires to have *a conscience;* and this conscience is the national conscience; and the grand evidence of the nation's having such a conscience, is the religious hypocrisy of its representative! While the subject itself may be too grave to be treated with ridicule, really this view of it is too ridiculous to be treated with gravity. And yet, after all, what better is the national religion, in any view of it, when considered as the profession of the nation's governors? Why should men profess, as governors, what they have neither faith

nor feeling of as private persons? We have no idea that He who "desireth truth in the inward parts," can be pleased with such a profession;—and yet such *must* be the profession, when that profession is merely *official*,—made, not by the *men*, but by the *place-men*; and what effect such a profession is likely to have on the religious sentiments and character of the people generally, it is not difficult to conceive. The leaven of the Pharisees, thus found tainting the upper and official portions of society, will be in danger of "leavening the whole lump."

Mr. Gladstone appears, accordingly, not insensible to the unavoidably mingled and impure communion of an established church, whose religion he has thus founded in political expediency or necessity. He would be more consistent in at once adopting the position of Hooker, that the church and the commonwealth are, in regard to the persons whom they respectively comprehend, the same, —every member of the commonwealth being, in virtue of his citizenship, a member of the church,— than he is when he writes thus:—"Certainly her faithful members must be content to stand side by side with many who care little for religion:—but the promises of Christ may secure them from the danger of contagion; and they may also acquire from their position a livelier remembrance of that lesson, that we may not say to one another, 'Stand by, for I am holier than thou.'—I say the promises of Christ; for the Establishment does but fulfil his prophetic declarations, in not attempting any uni-

versal separation of the tares from the wheat,—of the good fish from the bad; content with the laws of her mixed condition upon earth, emulous of the example of her Lord, who ate with publicans and sinners, and generous as her heavenly Father, who sends rain and light upon the just and the unjust,—rendering benefit, but not, therefore, receiving pollution."*—A volume might be written on the contents of these sentences. Never were falser principles vindicated by falser interpretations of the word of God. Were Mr. G. right, in regarding the passages to which he alludes as having reference to the communion of the church, then would the servants of Christ not only be justified in "not attempting a universal separation of the tares from the wheat, of the good fish from the bad,"—they would be *expressly prohibited* from attempting to make *any separation at all;* and thus, by proving too much, they would prove nothing,—destroying the characteristic distinctions of the church altogether, and reducing it to identity with the world. The fact that the passages cannot be applied at all to this subject, without leading directly to such a conclusion, might suggest, to any considerate and candid mind, a suspicion that the application is erroneous;—the conclusion being one so utterly at variance with the plainest dictates of sound sense, as well as of Scripture. The parable of the tares is prohibitory of the spirit of persecution, of which symptoms had discovered themselves amongst the disciples of Christ, and of every attempt to give

* The State in its Relations to the Church.

indulgence to that spirit by the extirpation of heretics and other enemies of the saints; an attempt which the faithful followers of Jesus never could make, without greater injury to themselves than to their foes,—without the risk, or the certainty, of rooting out more wheat than tares. The only law of christian fellowship that can consistently be deduced from such passages is—*Admit all, and exclude none.* Discipline becomes not only not a law, but a violation of law; and the worst of men, who, for any selfish or secular ends, should desire to participate in the ordinances of the church, and to be acknowledged as its members, might quote the tares and the bad fish, and defy refusal. For neither the one nor the other are meant to represent hypocritical professors,—these being, from their very designation, undistinguishable from true believers,—but known and manifest "children of the wicked one;" so that there is no evading the conclusion, and no confining it within narrower limits. But, if the indiscriminate admission of unconverted men to the privileges of the children of God be a means—(and who can doubt it?)—of deluding their souls, and sending them to perdition under a christian name;—then what an amount of soul-delusion and soul-murder is wrapt up in the very principle of an established church, and lies at the door of those who maintain the ruinous system! If the authority of Christ could be pleaded for an Establishment, then indeed might his people confide in his promises for security from any evils natively resulting from it; though it would certainly be

somewhat anomalous and strange, that an express institution of his should be of such a character and tendency as to require a security of the kind. But this authority has not been, and cannot be produced. And there is something very affecting in the thought of Christians creating dangers to their spiritual character, by surrounding and incorporating themselves with the contagion of the world, and then having recourse for safety to the promises of Him, whose laws they are violating, and whose sanctuary they are polluting:—and while it seems an extraordinary perversion of their Master's example,—in associating, in the ordinary intercourse of his ministry, for the communication of his lessons of mercy, with publicans and sinners,—to flatter themselves that they are "emulating" it when they receive to the communion of his house, and virtually acknowledge as his, men of worldly, and even of profligate character; it surely savours not a little of presumption, when, in such circumstances,—not in the unavoidable intercourse of ordinary life, but in wilfully blending the world with the church, and mixing themselves up, by a prostitution of christian ordinances, with the ungodly,—they console themselves with the thought, that the holy Jesus received no pollution from his association with evil on earth, and that their heavenly Father exercises his divine generosity without contracting any taint from the "evil and unthankful" on whom he confers his benefits!—Surely Paul would have said to those who indulged such confidence, and "boasted themselves" in the excellence of their system—"Your

glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump. Wherefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." There is something decidedly and far wrong, either in themselves, or their institutions, or both, when men flatter themselves with safety in doing the very thing which God himself pronounces pregnant with danger.

In speaking of the influence of Establishments in secularizing and corrupting the church, I avoid all mention of the peculiarities of the one or of the other in the South and in the North of our country; because to every thing of this kind, it might with fairness be replied, that the effects specified were the result of what would belong to the two churches, whether established or not; and were not therefore imputable to the principle or the working of an Establishment. On this account, I speak not of any thing connected with the episcopacy of the one, or the presbyterianism of the other;—of any peculiar points of doctrine in their respective creeds;—or of any articles in the constitution, or practices in the administration, of each, or of both; except in so far as these articles or practices have reference to their union with the state. The corruption of which I speak is the taint of secularity derived inevitably from this union. What history records as the fact, is no more than the reason of the case might have taught Christians, had they been duly considerate of the nature of the spiritual kingdom of which they were the subjects, to anticipate; and for my own part,

I would not desire a more convincing evidence of the previous declension of vital spirituality among the subjects of that kingdom in the time of Constantine, than their ready submission to its incorporation with the secular government of the empire. Paul would have heaved a sigh over the church, as having been "corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ,"—and as laying itself open, by its departure from his institutions, to the increased contamination of that purity and separation from the world, which were its original characteristics and its appropriate glory. We should have heard from him of "weak and beggarly elements whereunto they were desiring again to be in bondage;" and, in the spirit of indignant remonstrance, he would have said,—"Touch not, taste not, handle not!"—Dr. C. may speak of an Establishment "with an unfettered theology," and "without contamination from the authority of men;"—but the thing is impossible; it never has been, it never can be. Of the "unfettered theology" we may take some notice in our next lecture: our present subject is *contamination*. And we have only to ask,—When was there an Establishment without secular authority?—and when was there an instance, in which that authority was exercised without contamination? Such authority is inseparable from the very idea of an Establishment; and contamination is equally inseparable from its exercise. Even his own favourite Scottish church will not furnish an exception. If there is less in it of this contamination than in its Southern sister, whence does this arise, but from its amalgamation being less

intimate, — its points of contact fewer and less immediate, — its alliance, in a word, less close with the secular powers? It is an Establishment of an inferior grade. Its presbyterianism is not the religion of the court, nor has it any representation in the legislature. It has no seats in the Upper House. It is the Church of England that is *the* Establishment of the country:—and who is not convinced, that, but for it,—that, were there no other than the Church of Scotland, with its presbyterian parity, its limited patronage, and its destitution of mitres and of lawn, of ecclesiastical places and prizes,— the secular government would hardly regard the principle of an Establishment as a point worth contending for? That principle is a principle of secularization and assimilation to the world, in exact proportion to the force and directness of its operation. Who denies, that in both Establishments there is a large amount of good? But the good is there, not *by means* of that principle, but *in spite* of it. It would remain in its full amount, were the principle of state connexion disowned; — and it would remain, in happy separation from all that admixture of worldliness and pollution which by such connexion is induced, and thus in a condition of holy energy and untrammelled exercise, which would work out a rapid and abundant progression.—As things are, whatever be the established religion of the country, of that religion the government officially *must be*—although the head and members of the "governing body" may personally be of no religion at all; and the nation, too, collectively, is of

that religion, although nine-tenths of the population may be of no religion at all,—nominally christian, while really "without God in the world,"—conforming in multitudes to the national worship, and fancying themselves good Christians, when not a tithe or a twentieth, or perhaps a hundredth of them, are worshippers "in spirit and in truth." Here, I repeat, lies the fearful and the unavoidable mischief,—pervading the whole system, destroying the separate subsistence of the spiritual kingdom, and incorporating it, to the view of mankind, in all its aspects, with those of the world.

The extent of corrupting influence from the *secular patronage*, which forms so essential a feature in every Establishment, is melancholy. This flagrant abuse, in conjunction with other cooperating causes, has led to the deplorable facts, that thousands are destined from their cradle to livings in the church, without the slightest consideration of their future character or qualifications, and are presented with such livings, by those who have them in their gift, with infinitely less thought of their fitness than would be given to any secular calling;—that there is thus so lamentable an amount of clerical incompetency, carelessness, and worldly profligacy;—that in the southern chartered church,—according to some estimates, which may be regarded as the one extreme, *seven-eighths*, and according to others, which may be regarded as the opposite extreme, *two-thirds*, and according to a medium estimate, which may be accepted as about the truth, *four-fifths* of the 16,000 clergymen belonging to its communion

do not preach the doctrines of grace, as these doctrines are contained in the Articles of their own church; and that even in that of the northern section of the island, there exists what has been designated the *moderate* party, in distinction from the *evangelical*,—a party which for many a day swayed by a decided majority the councils of the general assembly, so that the fate of every measure materially affecting the spiritual interests of the church might with certainty have been predicted; and that, although this party has happily, of late years, been losing, and the other gaining, in numbers and strength, there is still, both in lowlands and highlands, many a parish,—and that too in those districts of the country, frequently, in which there is the least possible access to better means of spiritual benefit,—where, to the bitter regret of every candid friend of the gospel, lay or clerical, in that church itself, there is miserable destitution of instruction in those truths by which alone souls are saved,—where

"The hungry sheep look up and are not fed,"—

where even the morality that is preached, meagre and unevangelized as it is, is not recommended by a corresponding example,—where, according to the admission of one of the best and ablest of the ministers of that church themselves, popery is on the increase, "mainly by reason of the cold apathy and indolent supineness of the protestant clergy,"—and where, consequently, an extension of the same system would only be an extension of the evil.

From the union of the church with the state, moreover, and the political aspects under which religion, to so great an extent, and in so many modes, unavoidably presents itself, a tendency to *Hobbeism* is, in many minds, and minds too of a higher grade, very naturally engendered,—a tendency, that is, to consider religion as little if anything more than a state-engine, an instrument in the hand of the civil magistrate for maintaining good government, and giving the sanction of a superstitious fear to the laws,—and thus to regard it with a careless or a scornful infidelity. My conviction is, that the incorporation of Christianity with the civil politics of the world, by presenting its character under so secular an aspect as for successive ages it bears on the page of history, has turned many, who might have been believers, to sceptics, and many sceptics to infidels.

To the natural operation of national Christianity, too, we must impute the melancholy fact, that in all foreign countries where British commercial enterprise has made its way and effected a settlement, one of the greatest difficulties with which the missionaries of the Cross have had to contend,—the barrier which, of all others of an outward and incidental kind, they have found it hardest to overthrow,—has arisen from what the natives have seen and felt of the characters of men coming from the christian land and bearing the christian name, and whom they, in their ignorance, naturally and necessarily regarded as specimens of the effects of that religion which it was the avowed object of the

missionary to induce them to embrace. The cause of this is at once apparent, in the fact of *Briton* and *Christian*, or even more extensively, *European* and Christian, having, in consequence of the nationalizing of Christianity, become synonymous designations.

If, moreover, the religion of the "governing body" must, in so many cases, be the religion of mere external conformity to the legally prescribed rites of worship,—a religion, consequently, of simulation, and known to be so,—and if, to so great an extent, from the throne downwards, this system of religious masquerade prevails; we may extend our observation, as to corrupting influences, beyond the pale of the church itself. What effect is such a state of things calculated to produce on the moral principles of the community at large? There is a violation of "simplicity and godly sincerity" in the very highest of all the departments in which the exercise of these virtues can be required. What influence is this fitted to have on the principles of integrity, and the practice of honesty, in general? When men have learned dishonesty in religion, or have been taught by the example and the maxims of others to regard it as a political virtue, they have embraced a principle or received an impression, the transference of which to other departments—and such transference is natural and easy—is not likely to operate with any very salutary effect on the general morals of the nation. He who lies in religion gives no very secure pledge of truth in other things. — Thus, by bringing the world into the

church, to so vast an extent as Establishments necessarily and systematically do, the church itself loses its original character of separation and purity; and then, as a natural consequence, the salutary influence of the church upon the world is impaired, and even, in some respects, reversed; a deadening and corrupting taint proceeding from it, instead of its original life-giving and antiseptic virtue. It was "the salt of the earth;" but by the incorporation of worldly ingredients, "the salt has sadly lost its savour;"—and it is only by the separation of it from these ingredients, that its salutary operation can be effectually restored, as the divine antidote to the putrescence of social depravity, in our own community, and throughout our fallen world.

# LECTURE VIII.

EVILS OF ESTABLISHMENTS CONTINUED.—CONFOUNDING OF CIVIL AND ECCLESIASTICAL POWERS, OFFENCES, AND PENALTIES.—DESTRUCTION OF THE CHURCH'S INDEPENDENCE—AS TO CREED—NOMINATION OF MINISTERS—POWER OF JUDICATORIES.—PERSECUTION.—SOURCES OF MUTUAL JEALOUSIES AND ALIENATIONS AMONG FELLOW-CHRISTIANS.—PROSPECTS.—CONCLUSION.

THERE are two maxims mentioned by the ecclesiastical historian Mosheim, as having been early introduced into the christian church, although the one earlier than the other. The first was—"that it was an act of virtue to deceive and lie, when by that means the interests of the church might be promoted;"—and the second—"that errors in religion, when maintained and adhered to after proper admonition, were punishable with civil pains and corporal tortures." The former of these maxims, which are justly designated by the historian "equally horrible," he represents, in the beginning of the fourth century, as having been "of long standing," and as having "more or less tainted with its infection the greatest men and most eminent saints" of that as of preceding ages, and at the same time, as having, by the "ridiculous fables, fictitious prodigies, and pious frauds," which it had produced, done, not service, but "unspeakable detriment to the

glorious cause in which they were employed." To what an incredible extent of practical application this essential principle in the moral code of *Jesuitism* was carried in later ages of the church's history, is sufficiently notorious. It may not be unworthy of consideration, how far the institution of national religion, by legally requiring, on the part of the "governing body" in the country, the political profession of a faith which is not *bonâ fide* held, or personally influential, and conformity to a worship of which the spiritual obligation is not felt, and by thus, as noticed in the close of last lecture, necessitating dissimulation, is not chargeable with involving, to a certain extent, in act though not in avowal, the adoption of this nefarious maxim.

"The other maxim," says Mosheim, "relating to the justice and expediency of punishing error, was introduced with those serene and peaceful times which the accession of Constantine to the imperial throne procured to the church. It was, from that period, approved by many, enforced by several examples during the contests that arose between the Priscillianists and the Donatists, confirmed and established by the authority of Augustine, and thus transmitted to the following ages." This was the natural result of the adoption of Christianity as the religion of the empire; by which, in the language of Sir Edward Coke respecting England, it might be regarded as becoming "part and parcel of the law." And, while ecclesiastical errors and offences were visited with civil penalties, the converse by and by took place also, and crimes against the state,

violations of the civil law, were visited with the censures and punishments of the ecclesiastical tribunal;—a confounding of the provinces of the two jurisdictions, from which, in process of time, there arose incessant jealousies, and most serious and violent disputes. It was when the church and the state came into union that they came into collision: —as when two materials of different chemical affinities, each useful, and each, in a state of separation, quiescent, are brought into contact, the result is sudden explosion, furious effervescence, or ignition and bursting flame.—Dr. Campbell, with much ingenuity, traces the fact of secular causes coming before ecclesiastical courts, to the injunction given, by apostolic authority, to the church at Corinth, and, on the same ground, we have no reason to doubt, to all the churches, that they should not bring scandal on their christian profession by carrying such differences, as arose between any of them, before heathen tribunals; but that they should settle them amongst themselves, by reference to the judgment of their own brethren,—and punish them, when impenitently persisted in on the part of the offender, by such censures as the law of Christ prescribed. Of this Apostolic direction advantage had early been taken by the rulers of the church, to promote their own aggrandizement, and gratify their ambitious lust of power. And Constantine, in his zeal for the adopted church, desirous to confirm all its prerogatives, and probably not in the least degree sensible of the mischief he was doing in thus arming it with a power which never had been meant by its

divine Founder to belong to it,—"made a law, that the sentence of the bishop should, in every case, be final, and that the magistrate should be obliged to enforce its execution." "Then began the episcopal judgment," adds Dr. Campbell, "to be properly forensic, having compulsive execution by the ministry of the magistrate. Then, indeed, began the prelates, for the greater state and dignity in their judicial proceedings, to adopt the model and appendages of civil judicatories, and to have their chancellors, commissaries, officials, advocates, proctors, registers, apparitors," &c. &c.* It is surprising, that, when speaking of the avoidance of the scandal which one Christian suing another before a tribunal of infidels must necessarily bring upon their religion, "as having been one principal ground for which the Apostle advised the measure" (namely, of the churches settling such disputes of a secular character as arose amongst their members) a man of so sound a judgment, and of candour so ingenuous, as Dr. Campbell generally evinces, should be found representing "this evil as having been radically cured, when Christianity became the established religion, and the secular judges themselves were taken from the christian brotherhood!" We cannot allow charges laid by

* Campbell quotes another edict, declaratory of the power of any party, at any stage of a process that had come before a secular court, to appeal to the bishop, and ordering the cause on such appeal to go to his final decision. This edict, however, Hallam pronounces to have been clearly proved a forgery; though its provisions were afterwards adopted by Charlemagne.—Lect. on Eccles. Hist. vol. i. pp. 60, 61.

apostolic authority upon christian churches, to be set aside on any such ground.—"From the *christian brotherhood!*" Alas! would Paul, think you, have acknowledged the designation, when, by the establishment of Christianity, it came to be so generalized, and bereft of its primitive distinctiveness, by comprehending so very large a portion of the world under the christian name? Paul's command is, not to go to law "before *the unbelievers.*" Did unbelievers cease to occupy the civil tribunals, so soon as Christianity became the religion of the empire? Would the Apostle *then* have cancelled the prohibition? Or is it really to be understood as cancelled *now,* so that members of christian churches, instead of settling their differences in the church, may sue each other at their pleasure before the courts of civil jurisdiction, merely because these courts have been christianized, by being the courts of a christian nation? The question resolves itself into another—would the Apostle have regarded a *christian nation* as synonymous with a *christian church?* Would he thus have admitted the nationalizing of Christianity as annihilating the distinction between the church and the world? Would he have looked with complacency on true spiritual members of the "christian brotherhood" appearing as plaintiff and defendant before a British court of judicature,—considering them as thus following out his injunction,—as going to law "*before the saints?*" Alas! is not this only one of the evils of a national Christianity, that it renders true believers insensible to the scandal their law-suits are fitted to give to

the world, only by obliterating the distinction between the world and the church?

The Doctor speaks more like himself, when he says—"It was not at first understood, or duly attended to, how great the change was, which this new arrangement of Constantine made in the constitution of the empire. It was, in effect, throwing the whole judiciary power of the state into the hands of the clergy. All the ordinary judicatories were now reduced to act solely in subordination to the spiritual courts, which could overrule the proceedings of the secular, whilst their own were not liable to be overruled by any. The civil magistrate, who might be compelled to execute their sentences, but was not entitled to revise or alter them, was, in fact, no better than the bishop's sergeant. His office, in this instance, was by no means magisterial, it was merely ministerial and subservient."—The observation which he founds on this statement would have suited our illustration, in a former lecture, of the incompatibility between religion and every thing of the nature of constraint or coercion, such as belongs to the province of civil rule:—"It was in vain, at the period at which we are now arrived, to imagine, that in the same way as formerly, a sense of religion should operate on the minds of the people. This is a sentiment of too delicate a nature to be rendered compatible with the measures now adopted. From the moment the pastor was armed with the terrors of the magistrate, the power of religion was superseded, and the gentle voice of love was drowned in the clamour of com-

mitments, forfeitures, and distress of goods."—By such association, indeed, the very claims of religion on the belief of mankind are shaken. It is an admirable sentiment of Hallam, that "the truth of a religion begins to be very suspicious, when it stands in need of prisons and scaffolds to eke out its evidences."

But, in addition to this injurious influence to the interests of religion, strange and anomalous were the results, in other respects, of the alternations in the dominance of the two powers, and their contests about the boundaries of their respective provinces: the predominance at one time being of civil causes in the ecclesiastical courts, and at others of ecclesiastical causes in the civil courts,—now the church lording it over the state—the priest over the ruler; and anon the state asserting its ascendency over the church—the ruler getting the better of the priest. It is curious to mark, in civil and ecclesiastical history, the reciprocations of jealousy,—the internal dissensions, and even the international wars, which for ages arose from this cause. The introduction of the censures of the church as the punishment of offenders against the state,—"princes, who felt the inadequacy of their own laws to secure obedience, calling in the assistance of more formidable sanctions,"*—was a means of official aggrandizement such as was not likely to be improved by the ambition of a clergy, who, even previously to the establishment of Christianity, had discovered the aspirations of earthly pride, and in whom, after that event, the

* Hallam.

spirit of a lordly worldliness had gained so decided an ascendency. "The power obtained by national churches," Mr. Hallam observes, "through the superstitious prejudices then received, and a train of favourable circumstances, was as dangerous to civil government as the subsequent usurpations of the Roman pontiff, against which protestant writers are apt too zealously to direct their animadversions." It may fairly be asked, however, Was it not this power that led to these very usurpations? Was it not the papal domination in embryo? When the sentence of ecclesiastical excommunication, with its various penal interdictions, came to be attached as a sanction to the laws of the civil government, those rulers who gladly availed themselves of it knew not what they did. The application of this sanction came afterwards to be gradually elevated and extended. "The boundary between temporal and spiritual offences became less and less distinct; and the clergy were encouraged to fresh encroachments, as they discovered the secret of rendering them successful." At length this heaviest of ecclesiastical denunciations assailed thrones, and comprehended kingdoms, laying them under an interdict, or suspension of religious offices; which, while it was not seldom for the mere gratification of some private pique, or resentment of a personal injury, inflicted no light privations, both temporal and spiritual, upon entire communities. "This," says the same philosophical historian, "was the main spring of the machinery that the clergy set in motion, the lever by which they moved the world. From

the moment that these interdicts and excommunications had been tried, the powers of the earth might be said to have existed only by sufferance." This heterogeneous confusion of civil and sacred, in the exercise both of the legislative and the executive powers, arose, according to the testimony of history, out of the union of church and state; and the combination of the two was carried to its utmost possible extent in that extraordinary system, of which the world had never seen the like before, and will never see the like again, and which, but for the introduction of the principle of such union, could never have found its way into existence,—the temporal and spiritual domination of the "man of sin,"—a domination of lordly arrogance, that made its footstool of the crowns of Europe,—the dreaded fulminations of the spiritual power disarming all opposition to the encroachments and assumptions of the temporal, and, through the artfully managed force of an abject and appalling superstition, canonizing some, and consigning others to a protracted purgatory or eternal fires, bowing down royal and imperial sceptres to the priestly crosier. What more natural, than that from the uniting of the church with the state, there should ultimately have grown the combination of the two powers in one person? If the magistrate at one time acted the ecclesiastic, and at another the ecclesiastic the magistrate, and by such alternation, and the introduction of what were called "mixed causes," the provinces of the two came to lose, to so great an extent, the distinctness of their line of separation,—the landmarks so frequently, by mutual

encroachments, shifting their positions; no wonder, surely, that the ambition of an aspiring clergy, having become so thoroughly and inveterately secularized, should have succeeded, as it did, in asserting the right of the church to the regalia of both worlds; and that at length, there should have been achieved by the papacy, "independent sovereignty, supremacy over the christian church, and control over the princes of the earth;" and that, in "great swelling words,"—not however "of vanity," for the success was too real, and the results too serious, to justify terms of derision,—one of the pontiffs should have thus expressed the twofold dominion of the church:—"As the sun and the moon are placed in the firmament, the greater as the light of the day, and the lesser of the night; thus are there two powers in the church;—the pontifical, which, as having the charge of souls, is the greater,—and the royal, which is the less, and to which the bodies of men only are entrusted!"—and that a successor to the triple crown, some time after him, by whom the arrogance of its pretensions was carried to a still loftier pitch, should have appeared at a public festival, instituted by himself, for the lustre of his court and the benefit of his coffers, "dressed in imperial habits, with the two swords borne before him, emblems of his temporal as well as spiritual dominion over the earth."

But this state of things, although capable of being traced back to a natural origin in the union of the civil and ecclesiastical under Constantine, was not at all in accordance with the legitimate principle of an

Establishment. It was the very reverse. The ambition of a worldly priesthood effected the subjugation of the state to the church; but the original and the permanent principle of an Establishment is,—to an extent which may vary according as the terms of the bargain, dictated by the conscious powers or the felt exigencies of the respective parties, are more or less favourable to the one or the other,—is the *dependence of the church upon the state.* That such was the original principle, when the church was first taken under the wing of the Roman eagle, we might have been previously assured from the absolute nature of the imperial authority, and its conscious power either to oppress or to protect the christian community; and the terms of history are in harmony with such assurance. "Constantine the Great," says Mosheim, "made no essential alterations in the form of government that took place in the christian church before his time; he only corrected it in some particulars, and gave it a greater extent. For, though he permitted the church to remain a body politic, distinct from that of the state, as it had formerly been, yet he assumed to himself the supreme power over this sacred body, and the right of modelling and governing it in such a manner as should be most conducive to the public good. This right he enjoyed without any opposition, as none of the bishops presumed to call his authority in question." By the authority of the emperor, the administration of the church was accommodated to such changes as he saw fit to introduce in the constitution and forms of the civil government. By the same authority,

the administration of the church was divided into the two departments of *external* and *internal*. The former the emperor assumed exclusively to himself; while the latter was committed by him—still in the exercise of authoritative supremacy—to the bishops and councils of the church. And from the account given us by the historian of what was embraced in the "*external* inspection" (between which and the internal the distinction was never defined with anything like precision), the extent of the church's vassalage to the imperial power is strikingly apparent:—the right, for example, of calling councils, of presiding at them, and of appointing the judges of religious controversies, almost entirely neutralizing and rendering nugatory the reference of such controversies to the internal or spiritual administration. It is impossible to enter into particulars; and, for the same reason which prevents this,—want of time,—I am constrained to omit all historical detail of the alternations of the temporal and the spiritual, in Europe generally, and especially in our own country, both before and after the Reformation. I must come at once to our own protestant Establishments in England and Scotland; and endeavour briefly to show, how much of the original principle of an Establishment,—the principle of the dependence of the church upon the state,—enters into their respective constitutions. We charge it on Establishments as one of their serious evils, that they interfere with the scriptural and divinely-chartered independence of the church.

"The church," says Hallam, "has undoubtedly

surrendered a part of her independence, in return for ample endowments and temporal power." Such surrender we regard as necessarily involved in the constitution of every established—that is, of every nationally-endowed—church; and while we consider the requisition of the surrender as, in the principle of it, on the part of the state, perfectly fair, we denounce compliance with the requisition, on the part of the church, as on no scriptural ground susceptible of vindication;—as a shameless dereliction of her primary allegiance,—a simoniacal sacrifice of the exclusive authority of her Lord, for temporal benefits,—a sacrifice unjustifiable even on the ground alleged in its behalf, of these temporal benefits being sought *for spiritual ends.*

There are three points of view in which we may, for a few moments, contemplate this sacrifice of the church's independence:—in regard to her *creed,*—to the *appointment of her ministers,*—and to the *power of her courts.*

To the *first* of these topics, I had occasion to advert, when speaking of the nature or principle of religious Establishments, in the first of these Lectures. The quotation then given from the late Principal Hill, sets the case in as plain and decisive a light as possible. Nothing can be clearer. The state gives endowments. I take these alone, independently of any other exclusive civil privileges; because they are enough for my argument. These endowments are connected with certain articles of faith to be taught, and certain principles of conduct to be inculcated, and modes of worship to be main-

tained, by the clergy of the religious body on whom they are bestowed. It is plain, that, as the provision comes from the state, it belongs to the state to determine how that provision is to be appropriated; that is, to *fix the creed* for the preaching of whose doctrines it is to pay. Even if a select number of theologians should be nominated to prepare them, still the *preparation* of them is not their *establishment.* They must be approved and sanctioned by the government—by the government, not of the church, but of the state. The party that is to pay, must, in all reason, have the right, and the sole right, to determine *for what.* And when, according to the authority with which all advocates of Establishments consider the civil rulers as invested, the creed has been fixed; the church that accepts the endowments becomes bound, by every principle of integrity, to maintain it, in all its articles, inviolate. The moment the judicatories of that church presume to introduce an alteration on their own authority, without seeking and obtaining the concurrent sanction of the civil power, they have violated their part of the formal or implied bargain, and have forfeited, by such infraction, all their right to the emoluments. The distinction between the church *as a church*, and the church *as an established church*, is so manifest, that it is surprising it should not by every mind of common sense be instantly perceived, and by every mind of common candour be instantly admitted. Dr. Chalmers may boast, on behalf of his own church, of an "unfettered theology;" but in no endowed church can there, by possibility, be any

such thing. The endowment fetters it. That chain of golden links passes round every article of it, and fastens the whole down. As a church, the Scottish church, or the English, may alter its creed,—may cancel it entirely, and adopt a new one. This is the undoubted prerogative of either, considered simply *as a church.* But this is precisely what each has relinquished in accepting a state-endowment. As churches established by law, they must have their articles and their confessions, their liturgies, and their books of discipline, and directories for the worship of God, prescribed to them by royal or by parliamentary authority :—and a change, unsanctioned by that authority, must involve a forfeiture of the endowment. How *could* Dr. C., if he thought at all of the very nature of an Establishment, say as he does,—"But even although the church should be "wholly supported by the state in things tempo- "ral, and a connexion between them be established "thus far, it follows not that this connexion should "proceed any further. There might be an entire "dependence on the state in things temporal, with- "out even the shadow of dependence upon it in "things ecclesiastical. Although the church should "receive its maintenance, and all its maintenance, "from the civil power, it follows not that it there- "fore receives its theology from the same quarter."* What! the state pay for the church, and have no control over the doctrines taught!—pay, and have nothing to say as to what it pays for! Would this be fair play? Has it ever been so? Is it so now?

* Lectures, page 11.

Ought it to be so ever? The fact is, that the Articles of the Church of England, originally settled and published by regal authority, require the same authority, the authority of her supreme earthly head, to legalize any alteration; and that the same is the case with all her forms of worship:—that the Confession of Faith of the Church of Scotland, along with its other authorized standards, is binding on that church, *as an established church*, not by the authority of the word of God, but solely by sundry acts of parliament; and that by act of parliament alone can any change be introduced. Is *this* independence? Is this "unfettered theology?" Is this the exclusive deference to Christ's authority which He, as the church's *only Head*, demands, and is so supremely entitled to? Away with the unworthy compromise of the church's dignity, and the honour of the church's Lord!

I pass to the *second* of my three particulars—the appointment of the church's ministers.—And here I feel it altogether unnecessary to enter into any detail respecting the law of patronage, either south or north of the Tweed. It is with *principles* I have to do; and my entering into such details, whether historical or legal, might produce in the minds of my hearers the false impression, that they were, in some way, required by my argument,—as if that argument depended, for any degree whatever of its conclusiveness, on the period and the circumstances when patronage was introduced, or on the extent to which, in either church, it exists. My cause is independent of all such considerations. The fact of

its existence is enough for my purpose. It exists in the English church; it exists in the Scottish. In the *former*, the archbishops, two in number, and the bishops, twenty-six in number, are appointed by the king, in his capacity of the church's supreme head on earth; and out of about twelve thousand livings, of various descriptions, while thirteen hundred are in the gift of the twenty-six bishops, and upwards of a thousand in the disposal of thirty deans and chapters, there are nearly seven hundred in the hands of the two Universities of Oxford and Cambridge,—one thousand and forty-one in the gift of the Crown, through the medium, in different proportions, of the First Lord of the Treasury, the Lord Chancellor, and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster,—fourteen hundred in the patronage of three hundred peers and baronets,—and six thousand four hundred and ninety-one in that of about four thousand private patrons; and there are not to the number of seventy in the hands of the people.—In the *latter*, out of between a thousand and eleven hundred parochial livings, three hundred are in the gift of the Crown, and about six hundred in the hands of noblemen and landed proprietors; while of the remainder, when those are deducted which are at the disposal of universities and municipal corporations, a very small fraction of the whole is found in the power of the people. As I cannot regard the *population of a parish*, consisting of all descriptions of characters, religious and irreligious, good, bad, and indifferent, in the light of a *christian church*,—I do not feel myself called upon to decide

the question, whether patronage or election by *such* a population is the more likely to prove beneficial. They are both equally at variance with the word of God. If the Churches of England and Scotland embrace a large proportion of the inhabitants of the country from whom the Head of the church would enjoin his people to "withdraw themselves," as from "heathen men and publicans,"—this corruption, we have before seen, is the fault of the church-and-state system, and, in no inconsiderable proportion of its amount, might be traced to the operation of the evil under consideration—of lay patronage. And such patronage has belonged to all Establishments, and enters essentially into the theory of their constitution; this being a part of the control, which, from the period of the union of church and state, all history has shown how indispensable it is that the latter should retain over the former,—and a part, too, of the sacrifice which the former makes to the latter, in return for her endowments and peculiar privileges. There is no disputing this. The surrender of the right of the people to choose their own pastors was the price of those endowments; or, in other words, the consent of the church to hold the appointment to her livings by the royal will, or by act of parliament. I do not resume the consideration of the wretched effects resulting from this feature of the Establishment system, in the character of the clergy, the corruption of religion, and the consequent deterioration of the morals of the people: I speak at present of the shameful surrender involved in it of the church's independence. If there

be any one thing in the constitution of a church, which ought to be regarded as strictly ecclesiastical and inalienable, it surely is the appointment of its own spiritual servants. And what right has the church thus to dispense with the laws of its divine Lord, on any ground of imagined expediency, or for any consideration of secular interest?—"In the Church of England," says Principal Hill, "persons presented to a benefice are tried, ordained, admitted, and inducted, by authority of the Bishop:—in the Church of Scotland, this office of a superior order of clergy devolves upon a college of equals, acting by their moderator:—but, by whomsoever the office is performed, *the idea of an established church implies, that, in the admission of its ministers, the laws of the state concur with ecclesiastical authority.*"* Yes; and, *e converso*, the ecclesiastical authority must concur with the laws of the state. Oh! it is an unseemly and miserable spectacle, when, in church courts, the discussion of the question, 'What is the law of Christ?' is supplanted by the question, with which it ought never to have been encumbered, What is the law of the land? that is, what is the law, not of the church of Christ, but of the *Established church?*—It is well known, that, in consequence of certain encroachments on the vested rights of lay patrons by recent acts of the General Assembly of the Scottish church,—especially that known under the name of the *Veto* Act,—the civil and ecclesiastical authorities have come into direct collision; the decision of the Court of Session, the

* Inst. Part II. Lect. III.

supreme civil judicatory in Scotland, against the Assembly, in causes arising out of that act, having placed the supreme court of the church in rather an awkward dilemma. An appeal has gone from it to the House of Lords; and all is anxiety for a final judgment from that quarter. But really, to the merits of our present question, it seems to me of no great moment on which side that judgment may be given. *The simple fact of the cause being there,* is an acknowledgment of dependence. If the *decrete* of the Court of Session be affirmed, it is by state authority that the church's powers are determined to be less ample than her representative body had supposed; and, even should it be reversed, and the Assembly declared not to have gone *ultra vires,* it is still by the same state authority that the legitimate amplitude of her powers is ascertained.—*We* regard all this as a flagrant outrage on the rights and liberties of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, and a treasonable derogation from his supreme and exclusive authority. It is with feelings of shame and indignation that we contemplate such appeals, as a letting-down of the independent dignity of the church of the living God, and an insult to that "King whom Jehovah hath set on his holy hill of Zion."*

* Since this Lecture was delivered, judgment has been given, in the appealed "Auchterarder Case," by the Lord Chancellor, in the House of Lords,—AFFIRMING the decision of the Court of Session. It now remains to be seen what effect this judgment will have on the deliberations of the approaching General Assembly of the Scottish Church. The crisis is interesting.

The *third* particular in which we consider the independence of the church to be invaded by its union with the state, is the power ascribed to the civil magistrate in and over her courts or authorities.—"When christian kings," says Hooker, "are said to have spiritual dominion or supreme power in ecclesiastical affairs and causes, the meaning is, that within their own precincts or territories, they have an authority and power to command, even in matters of christian religion, and that there is no higher nor greater that can, in those cases, overcommand them, when they are placed to reign as kings." Such is his definition of the royal supremacy over the English church; to which the only exception of superiority made by him is that of "God himself, the King of all dominion." This is surely absolute enough. And it is in virtue of this supremacy, that, in the English church, the king has power "to call and to dissolve all solemn assemblies about the public affairs of the church;" and that the royal assent is necessary to give to any act of such assemblies the sanction of ecclesiastical law: this "universal power,"—according to Hooker, transferred, by public consent, from the Papal to the British Crown,—"reaching over all, imparting supreme authority of government over all courts, all judges, all causes;" and its operation being "as well to strengthen, maintain, and uphold, particular jurisdictions, which haply might else be of small effect; as also to remedy that which they are not able to help, and to redress that wherein they at any time do otherwise than they ought to do." This

royal headship being acknowledged by the Episcopalian church, it is not on the south of the Tweed that we hear any vauntings of independence. The contrary is admitted. It were, indeed, preposterous to talk of independence, while such statements as these, from the "judicious Hooker," are granted to be correct, and while one fact only is before their eyes, were there no other. How long is it since the Houses of Convocation met on ecclesiastical affairs? By whom were their meetings suspended? And whose authority is necessary to their being held again? Since the period of the Hoadleyan or Bangorian controversy, considerably more than a century ago, has either the one or the other of them held a single assembly? And *can* they meet, and *dare* they transact business, without a royal rescript? And is this the independence of Christ's church? And does such secular power really belong to the constitution of that kingdom which is "not of this world?" And is it indeed in the church that boasts of *apostolical succession*, that *apostolical authority* is thus ignominiously superseded? I say again, *ignominiously;* for the authority of royalty itself is ignominy, when it is allowed to set aside that of Him who "hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written,—King of kings, and Lord of lords."

But the *independence of the church* has recently become the favourite theme with many of our brethren in the Northern Establishment;—although still more recently, some of its leading advocates, and Dr. C. himself among the rest, have begun to speak rather doubtingly about the correctness of the

phraseology, and to hint the propriety of substituting some other, more strictly true. But it matters not whether the ecclesiastical authority of which they boast be called *independent* power or *intrinsic* power. It may belong to them *as a church;* but, under neither appellation does it belong to them *as an established church.* I must endeavour here to avoid the repetition of what was said on this subject in our first lecture, in illustrating the true nature and constitution of an Establishment. The Church of Scotland has never conceded to the king the designation of *Head.* But there is such a thing as refusing a title, and yet granting all, or almost all, that the title implies.—"We own no head of the church," says Dr. C., "but the Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever is done ecclesiastically is done by our ministers, acting in his name, and in perfect submission to his authority. Implicated as the church and the state are imagined to be, they are not so implicated as that, without the concurrence of the ecclesiastical courts, a full and final effect can be given to any proceeding by which the good of Christianity and the religion of our people may be affected. Even the law of patronage, right or wrong, is in force, not by the power of the state, but by the permission of the church, and, with all its fancied omnipotence, has no other basis than that of our majorities to rest upon."—The particular exemplification of the general position, specified in the last sentence, is a *lis sub judice,* of which it is enough, in the meanwhile, to say —*we shall see.* What I wish you now specially to mark is, the very discreet and qualified terms in

which the affirmation of the Scottish church's independence is here couched. The amount of that independence, it seems, is—that "a full and final "effect cannot be given to any proceeding affecting "the good of Christianity or the religion of the "people, *without the concurrence of the Church "Courts.*" And is this all? Is this independence? Is this even "intrinsic power?" It seems to be forgotten, that the question is not what the state can do without the church;—but what the church can do without the state. If the church cannot "give full and final effect" to her own measures without the concurrence of the state,—is it to be admitted, notwithstanding, as proof sufficient of her independence, that the state cannot give such effect to ecclesiastical measures without the concurrence of the church? To speak of the church as "*the unfettered mistress of her own doings,*" when she cannot take a single step at variance with the existing *law of Scotland,* even for the purpose of bringing herself into nearer conformity to the *law of Christ,* without risking at least, if not actually incurring, the forfeiture of her Establishment,—can be characterised by no term more appropriate than *gasconade.*—And what, then, shall we say of the following?—"The king, by "himself or by his representative, might be the spec-"tator of our proceedings; but, what Lord Chatham "said of the poor man's house, is true, in all its "parts, of the church to which I have the honour to "belong—In England, every man's house is his "castle. Not that it is surrounded with walls and "battlements: it may be a straw-built shed: every "wind of heaven may whistle round it; every

" element of heaven may enter it;—but the king " cannot,—the king dare not!"—If Dr. C. meant by this, that were the Church of Scotland *severed from the state*, it would be thus independent of secular control, and might defy the intrusion of royalty itself,—it is a glorious truth; and would to God that the consummation of this honourable independence were near! But that would be to mean nothing. He speaks of the church to which he belongs, *as it now is*. And in this view of his words, is it possible that he should have weighed them, and used them deliberately? They are *bold* words; but are they *true?* "*Dares not*" indeed! Who is this, that places the church in such an attitude of defiance to the ruling power:—and in so doing, gives her a position so utterly at variance with the admissions and explicit statements of her own standards? The language is what every church *ought* to be able, with truth, to use;—but it is, we hesitate not to say, what no *established* church *can* with truth use. The fact is, that our brethren in the Northern Establishment are, many of them at least, *in advance of their standards*. There is a march of opinion on the subject of religious liberty that is forcing them forward in spite of themselves. They are becoming dissenters in the church. They are, at all events, holding, when they speak thus, the *language* of dissent; and the reason is, that they cannot otherwise use the language of *freedom*. The distinction between them and us is, that we dissenters can use it *truly*. *Our* freedom is real; *theirs* is that of the man who strives to hide his chain and boasts of his being unfettered.

The royal commissioner, the king's representative in the Scottish General Assembly, if we are to credit Dr. C., is no more than a mere visitor,—a "looker on,"—who is there by the sufferance of the church, but who is not entitled to exercise any control whatever over their proceedings. Now the question is one which relates, not to actual conduct, but to *right* and *power*. Is there anything like consistency between the representation of Dr. Chalmers, and that of the Confession of Faith, the book to which he and every minister of that church vows unqualified assent? What says that Confession?—"The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven:—yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed. For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God."—Such is the extent of power assigned to the civil magistrate in the Confession of Faith of the Scottish church:—and yet the king, should he choose to appear in person to occupy the throne in the General Assembly,—and his vicegerent, nominated by himself for the purpose, when he actually *does* appear there,—is a mere cipher,—has no power,—is present, not by right, but by

sufferance,—occupies what is called the throne, not as the seat of authority, but of mere courtesy,—and "*dares not*," how contrary soever the proceedings may be to the "unity and peace of the church," which he is bound to "preserve,"—or to the "truth of God," which it is his duty to see "kept pure and entire,"—or how much soever they may seem to him fitted, instead of "preventing," to promote "corruptions and abuses," and instead of ensuring the due "settlement, administration, and observance" of divine ordinances, to bring them into disrepute, disorder, and neglect,—"*dares not*," in any way or in any degree whatever, to interfere!—How are statements so contradictory to be reconciled? Is Dr. Chalmers to be our authority, or the Confession? If, indeed, this article of the Scottish creed is a *dead letter*,—then let the Doctor be consistent, and bring in an overture to next Assembly for the expurgation of the whole passage. For if his present affirmations be true, its continuance there is a mockery of the monarch, and vowing assent to it is perjury in the clergy.

It is rather a remarkable circumstance, that the mover of the overture in last General Assembly, asserting the independence of the Scottish church, while he makes various references to the Confession, and cites from it different affirmations of the sole headship of Christ in his visible church, carefully eschews this *twenty-third chapter*—never alluding to it, any more than if it had not been there! Why was this? It looks not well. Was Mr. Buchanan sensible, that on the terms of the section just quoted he could not have maintained his ground?—that

the simple reading of it would have made his whole argument a *felo-de-se*?—that his organs of utterance would have brought out what was so thoroughly at *antipodes* to the drift of his address, and what set the authority of his own church so directly against him, with so hesitating and blushing an embarrassment, that he thought it better to let it alone? The passage is one which it is impossible to explain away. Its terms are too explicit for that; and the texts of Scripture adduced in proof of its different portions, form too plain a commentary on the sense in which, by the original compilers, the terms were used, to admit of that. The power ascribed to the civil magistrate is as great as any high-churchman of the South could reasonably desire; and we formerly saw how Principal Hill pronounces this section of the "Confession," *the same thing* with one of the "Thirty-nine Articles" on a like subject. Our friends may please themselves with the distinction between an authority *circa sacra* and an authority *in sacris*:—but, as in the days of Constantine, so now, the line of discrimination can never be rendered sufficiently definite; and any one who examines the different *items* of the power assigned in the Confession to the magistrate will be satisfied, that, if he were to assert his claim, and to insist on the practical exercise of all the power that is there lodged in his hands, there would be found but little remaining under the phrase "the keys of the kingdom of heaven," the right to which is by the article denied him. If the terms do not express an authority *in sacris*, I shall despair of ever understanding the very plainest forms of speech.—And mark further.

In the very next section of the same chapter of the Confession, we have the following statement:—"Infidelity, or difference of religion, doth not make void the magistrate's just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to him; from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted." So that here we have the monstrous anomaly, of an infidel magistrate invested formally, in terms to which every minister in the Scottish church bows assent and vows adherence, with authority, and of course bound in duty, to take charge of the unity and peace of the church, of the purity and integrity of God's word, of the suppression of blasphemies and heresies, of the prevention and reformation of all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline, and the due settlement, administration, and observance of all the ordinances of God!—Really, if our brethren in the church are not themselves shocked and shaken by such an outrage on all the principles of reason, religion, and common decency,—they must be in possession of some modes of explanation of their own, to which I am a stranger, and with which I have no desire to be familiar; or there must be something in the air of a chartered and state-walled Zion, that braces them to a constitutional hardiness against the influence of truth. Oh that they would cease to breathe it!—and that, relinquishing the high places of their privileged locality, they would consent, in a brotherhood of equality and love, to take possession, with their fellow-christians, of a common Zion, "the Zion of the Holy One of Israel," and inhale with them the

pure and salubrious atmosphere of the hill of God!

On the subject of *persecution for conscience' sake*, it is unnecessary that I should dwell long. I am far from saying that this monstrous evil originated with the establishment of Christianity. That would be equally foolish and false. The cause of persecution lies deeper—even in the opposition of the human heart to the principles of the gospel, and the holy requirements of the christian law. This was the origin of both private and public persecution from the beginning of the gospel; and even, indeed, from the time when Cain slew Abel, "because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous:"—and when Christianity, which had been persecuted by previous emperors, was patronized by Constantine, the public violence of heathen Rome was for the time suspended. But when heathen persecution terminated, *christian* persecution (if a phrase so self-contradictory may be allowed) commenced.—I cannot hesitate to affirm, that *persecution is involved in the very principle of an Establishment.* What is that principle? It is, *the power of the civil magistrate in matters of religion.* Deny this power; and you leave no basis on which Establishments can rest. All their advocates maintain this power. The style in which their advocacy of it is conducted has, it is true, by the irresistible influence of public opinion, and the advance of enlightened views of religious liberty, been wonderfully modified:—so that Dr. Chalmers, while he pleads for the right of the

Government to determine the national faith, would confine his idea of an Establishment to the simple support of that faith, by a legal provision;—and what is it that Mr. Gladstone, in speaking of the competency of the "governing body" to choose a religion for the community, founds upon that competency? —"an obligation to exercise that choice, and, *as it were*, *advise* the people to adopt and follow that religion which the governing body has adopted as the best." This, it will be admitted, is a sufficiently gentle expression of the amount of the magistrate's power in religion. And we cannot help thinking, that some of the principles avowed by Mr. G., in distinguishing between things sacred and things civil, and the means of enforcement appropriate to each, ought, if consistently followed out, to lead him further than they have done. We cannot but have some hope of a writer who has got even so far as to sum up the power of civil rulers, in regard to religion, in *choosing* for their people, and *advising* the people to accept the choice. I know of only *one word* that is necessary to be introduced into the sentence I have just cited, to place Mr. G. on the side of Voluntaryism; and it seems to me that consistency requires him to admit it. Instead of saying, "Advise the people to accept and follow"—let him say, "Advise the people to accept and follow *and support* that religion which the governing body has adopted as the best,"—and he is almost, if not altogether, *one of us*. For really, although we peremptorily resist the right of choice, yet should we regard the exercise of that right as comparatively

a very harmless thing, were there no subsequent power connected with it but the power of *advice!* But what consistency is there between *advising* to accept and follow, but *compelling* to support? Does the latter not partake essentially of the principle of persecution? In another part of his work, Mr. G. admits that the objection of the man who holds it hard that he should "give his money"—by state exaction, that is—"to a form of faith which he does not approve," "would be valid, if the money *were* his." But, according to Mr. G. it ceases to be his, and his conscience to be at all responsible for its appropriation, as soon as it has passed into the public treasury. We have not time to discuss this point. We hold that, on every theory of good government, the public treasury is public property, and the "governing body" responsible to the community for the use they make of it; and that any other theory is not freedom, but despotism. Be this, however, as it may,—we do regard the exaction of money for any purposes properly religious as involving persecution. The "governing body" are quite aware of the conscientious scruples of a large portion of their subjects. They know that these subjects hold themselves amenable for their religion to God alone,—and that in matters so solemn as those which affect his glory and the eternal interests of men, they feel it, not a mere pecuniary hardship—(that were comparatively unworthy of complaint)—but a violation of the most sacred of all the principles a moral and responsible agent can hold, to be obliged to contribute to the support of systems

which they conscientiously regard as derogatory to the one, and extensively pernicious to the other. And in these circumstances, it is but a sorry satisfaction to be told—Your money is yours now, to be sure; but I take it from you; it then ceases to be yours, and becomes mine; and although you know I take it for a purpose which your conscience disowns, yet when it has become mine, you have nothing to do with the application of it, and may keep your conscience easy. Is this the language of a paternal, a just, a religious government? They whose own consciences are under the sway of religion, will hold sacred the religious scruples of others. —The truth is, that the power of *exaction* is a part of the power of the sword; and that this power of the sword is the proper and distinctive power of the civil magistrate. A power of *advice* is no power; or, as far as it is a power, it is not *the magistrate's power*, but a power common to him with every subject in his realm. If the magistrate has the right to dictate a national religion, he must have a right to enforce conformity to it. Nothing can be within his legitimate power to *enact*, which it is not within his legitimate power to *enforce;* for enactment without power to compel submission and to punish the refractory, is not the power of the sword, and therefore not the power of the magistrate. If the power of *the sword* in religion is disowned, the *magistrate's* power in religion is disowned. To "bear the sword" —the Scripture phrase for the power of civil rulers —is to possess the *right*, and the *means*, of *penal enforcement;*—and if penal enforcement in matters

of religion be persecution, then is the ascription of the power of such enforcement to the magistrate, the ascription to him of a power to persecute. In one word—ALL COMPULSORY POWER IN RELIGION IS PERSECUTION.

The origin of all the mistakes, numerous and grievous, which have prevailed on this subject, has been, as I have more than once noticed, the founding of the right, or authority, of christian Establishments on the example of the Jewish. To this, as a model, the appeal has all along been incessantly made; and from the manner in which that appeal was made by our protestant forefathers, it is evident that they had the merit of at least far greater consistency than many—perhaps I might now say than most—of our modern churchmen; who, in these happily enlightened days, even while they are making the same appeal, dare not carry out the principle of it to its legitimate length,—or quote, in proof of the compulsory and punitive power of the magistrate in matters of religion, the texts which were boldly cited of old, as placing such power beyond a doubt. I may be allowed to illustrate this remark from the Scottish Confession of Faith, and the acts of assembly and of parliament relative to it. There can be no question, that the principles of that Confession—the unaltered standard to this day of the Church of Scotland, — are, as they were understood by its framers, *rankly persecuting*. Having spoken of the powers ordained by God as having been intended by him "not to destroy, but mutually to uphold, each other," and of those who opposed either—the

civil or the ecclesiastical, as "resisting the ordinance of God"—it proceeds thus:—"And for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature, or the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation; or to the power of godliness; or such erroneous opinions or practices as, either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing and maintaining them, are destructive to the peace and order which Christ hath established in the church; they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against, by the censures of the church, *and by the power of the civil magistrate.*" Observe, it is resistance to *ecclesiastical* as well as civil power that may thus be proceeded against by the latter,—and that, too, in matters strictly and exclusively religious;—and that the power by which they are to be proceeded against is the "power of the sword," in all its naked and literal terrors, is manifest from the array of passages of Scripture adduced in proof. We find amongst them, not only the very passage from Paul's Epistle to the Romans, which speaks of the magistrate "not bearing the sword in vain," but being a "revenger, to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil;"—but those which describe the power of the Jewish rulers,—a power which the command of Jehovah laid them under peremptory charge to put in exercise,—to stone to death the idolater and the blasphemer, and to smite with the edge of the sword any city, of which, by the enticement of "sons of Belial," the inhabitants had been seduced into

the worship of false gods;—and others, in which the good kings of Judah are recorded to have put down and slain the priests of the high places, and of all the modes of idolatrous defection, and to have entered into covenants that "whosoever would not seek the Lord God of Israel, should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman;"—and others still, which inform us of the orders of heathen magistrates in favour of the Jewish religion, that upon those who "would not do the law of the God of Ezra, or of the king" by whom he was commissioned, "judgment should be executed speedily, whether it were to death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment,"—and that "every people, nation, and language that should speak a word against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, should be cut in pieces, and their houses made a dunghill." There is no mincing the matter here. Such is the power, and such its exercise, to the tender mercies of which heretics of every description,—all by whom opinions are published that are contrary to the known principles of Christianity (of which the civil ruler is of course the judge), or to the power of godliness, or to the peace of the church,—are delivered over by that Confession, which is to this hour the unexplained and unmodified standard of the faith and practice of the Scottish Establishment. I might go through the various acts both of assembly and of parliament, in reference to the Confession, and the covenants founded upon it, and show the same views, spirit and letter, pervading

them all;—and show too, how humble and how earnest were the supplications of the church to the state, for the intervention of its authority to sanction, and of its punitive power to maintain, "*by all civil pains*," the creed and worship approved by the assembly, and to suppress and extirpate whatever was opposed to them. But this is needless.

Such are the miserable and mischievous misapprehensions, which have arisen from not distinguishing between the state of things under a theocracy, and under an ordinary human government, as explained in a former lecture; and there are not wanting instances even very recent, in which adherence has been avowed to such principles of persecution and extermination in their full extent. Such instances, however, it is to be hoped, are, in our own days, but rare. What was right and just under a theocracy, becomes a violation of all justice and rectitude under a mere earthly legislature; what in the one was obedience to God, being a commanded act both of religion and of loyalty, rendered to him in his twofold capacity as their God and King, is in the other at once the presumptuous assumption, and the impious defiance, of his authority. The principles of persecution are the same, whether they be directed against the true religion, or against what is opposed to it. When Constantine, towards the end of his reign, issued penal edicts against the remaining heathenism of his empire, and when other emperors followed him in this, it was just as far wrong, as when preceding emperors had wielded the instruments of death against

the Christians:—as far wrong,—and, in my apprehension, incomparably more incongruous and unseemly, in proportion to the degree in which the true, the divine religion, should have been held infinitely independent of any such means, either of propagation or of defence. In our own country, the principles and the practice of persecution were far from ceasing with the introduction of the reformed faith. Protestantism continued to persecute, as popery had done before it. It might not be in the same degree, but it was on the same false grounds, and for the same false ends; being employed as part of the carnal enginery of the "defenders of the faith," who breathed the haughty spirit of high prerogative, and who persisted in the heaven-insulting mimickry of papal and of Jewish power. It is unnecessary to detain you by a detailed matter-of-fact proof of the amount of persecution, not during the resumption of popery in the reign of Mary the Bloody alone, but in those of Henry the Eighth himself, and even of the good and hardly consenting Edward, and of Elizabeth, of "high commission" and "star-chamber" memory,—and then, in succession, of the monarchs of the Stuart dynasty. Who is not familiar with the arbitrary attempts to force episcopacy on the people of Scotland, and with the scenes of tyranny, oppression, treachery, and blood, enacted in that country, in consequence of the resolute refusal to submit to the royal will? And who is not familiar, too, with the manner in which our church friends in that quarter chaunt the praises of those covenanting

martyrs who resisted, even to the death, the introduction of "black prelacy" into their native land? And yet, who does not perceive, that, on the principles of those who hold it to be the duty of the head of the nation, or the "governing body," to choose a religion,—that is, a system of faith and worship,—for the community, the resistance made was resistance to this very principle—resistance to what is, not admitted only, but affirmed, to come within the legitimate and scriptural limits of the magistrate's power,—and, as a necessary sequence, that presbyterianism owes its establishment in Scotland to rebellion? According to *our* principles, resistance,—I will not enter into the dispute about its extent, whether passive only, or both passive and active,—but resistance, at any rate in the sense of determined refusal to submit, was not only justifiable—it was imperative. But I cannot help regarding it as a very great inconsistency, to uphold the right and duty of governors to choose their people's religion, and in the same breath, to laud to the skies the man who "resisted unto blood," striving against the exercise of this very right and duty, as the intolerable presumption of a despot. The friends of Establishments in the North may be thankful that the efforts to force episcopacy upon their country were unsuccessful; but they must be content to be thankful at the expense of their own principles,—principles which convert their martyrs into rebels.*

* Our friends of the church in Scotland had better be looking about them; for although Mr. Gladstone does not speak of

It is a circumstance, too, on the present subject, deserving of special observation, that, while advances the most important and cheering have been made, both in the principles and the practice of religious liberty,—*we have owed not one step of this progress to the ecclesiastical department of our constitution!* What proposal has ever emanated from the church for the extension of this liberty? Nay, what proposal of the kind is there, that has not, from that quarter, had to encounter uncompromising opposition? The church, which ought to be the very concentration of the spirit of freedom, and liberality, and love, has not only never suggested a measure for the relief and benefit of other classes of its christian brethren, but has put into operation, on all occasions when such suggestions were hinted elsewhere, every attainable means for their frustration?—Liberty is advancing, and will advance. Its progress cannot be stopped, however it may, for a time, be successfully impeded. The principles and systems of past ages are undergoing a thorough sifting; and the closer and more deliberate and complete the investigation, the greater is the likelihood that the progress of freedom, if less rapid, will be more enlightened and sure, and, at each step, the more steadily secured from retrogression. Statutes

coercing Scotland still into conformity, but, on the ground of the Act of Union, claims on its behalf all that belongs to a National Establishment,—yet he not darkly hints that—"as individuals, those who hold the unity of the body are bound to endeavour to restore the Apostolical system in the national state of religion for Scotland; and for that end, to use every fair means of procuring the alteration of the law."

have been rescinded which subjected to civil pains and penalties—some of them even to death—the impugners of the doctrine of the Trinity,—and the reproach has thus been rolled away from Trinitarians of suppressing error by means unworthy of truth. Those iniquitous and profane remnants of a persecuting age, the Corporation and Test Acts, have been abrogated; and that muniment of an established church, of which Warburton boasted of having so triumphantly demonstrated the necessity, has been swept away. The Roman-catholic part of the population have been freed from their civil disabilities, and, to a great extent, admitted to common rights and privileges with their fellow-subjects. Various proposals and attempts to abridge the liberties of dissenters have been happily frustrated; and the very discussions to which they gave rise, have contributed to the promotion of what they were meant to crush; so that it has fared with the dissenting body as it did of old with Israel, when, on Balaam being sent for to curse them,—"The Lord their God turned the curse into a blessing." Considerable progress has been made in liberal principles on the great subject of national education, although in that department there is much yet to be effected,—and here, as on various other subjects, the chief difficulties are found to spring from that "root of bitterness" which it is our aim to extirpate —the union of the church with the state. It is to be hoped that liberal-minded statesmen will not any longer allow themselves to be embarrassed by the monopolizing jealousies of churchmen, on a matter

of such vital importance to the character, the peace, and the prosperity of the commonwealth. The measures introduced and partially adopted for church-reform have, by the investigations and controversies to which they have given rise, brought more fully into view the amount of existing abuse and corruption, and have contributed to give greater currency and strength to the conviction, that in the very principle of the system there is something from which these evils are inseparable,—and that no radical reform of the church can be effected by any means short of her entire separation from her secular alliances. Civil liberty has been gaining ground at the same time with religious; and, indeed, the two touch in so many points, and to so great a degree reciprocally affect each other, that it is impossible the one can retrograde, or even be stationary, while the other is advancing. In many points they are not distinguishable from each other. Religious liberty is a branch of civil liberty; the unfettered and uncompulsory exercise of conscience in religion, being one of the most sacred and inalienable immunities of every citizen:—so that it involves a contradiction to imagine either of them on the retreat, while the other is on the march. They must move on together *pari passu.*

The foundations of ecclesiastical power have thus been gradually, and are now more and more rapidly loosening. The advocates of Establishments are evidently sensible of this. The general aversion in the country to monopolies is bearing with its full force against that worst of all monopolies — the

monopoly of religion and a free conscience,—the monopoly of state favour on religious grounds,—the monopoly of a chartered religious corporation, which maintains its privileged ascendency, and under which all other sects are degraded to *toleration*, professing their faith and following their worship by *sufferance*. This state of things cannot now last long. It is hastening to its final overthrow. The peace that had long reigned under such a system, was unworthy of the name. It was the peace of ignorance and inconsideration,—of a listless love of ease,—of the apathy of custom,—of the habits of servility. But now that the public mind has been thoroughly awakened, the sentiment is gaining ground, that peace, to be really desirable and salutary, must be founded in truth; and, among Christians, that, how painful soever may be the disruption of the bonds of former intimacies, how trying soever to the spirit that really desires unity, to be assailed with the incessant charge of disregarding and disturbing it,—it is necessary that truth be maintained, and that temporary evils be endured for the sake of ultimate and permanent good. The storm will pass away. The troubled elements will settle into rest. Only let the "Spirit of God move upon the face of the waters," and from the darkness and discord of the present chaos will spring forth, to the admiration and joy of the world, a system of light and order, and beauty, and social gladness,—a system in harmony with the divine word, and with the benevolent purposes of divine grace.

It is marvellous, with what opposite feelings

present events are contemplated, and the prospects augured from them are anticipated, by men of different parties.—In the bosoms of our church friends, all is agitation and apprehensive fear, as if religion and social order were about to bid an everlasting farewell to our country, and to leave it the wretched scene of anarchy and atheism, with all their attendant vices and woes. They have put the trumpet of alarm to their lips,

> "——— and blown a blast so loud and dread,
> Were ne'er prophetic sounds so full of woe!"

—Dr. Chalmers sums up his apprehensions,—and we believe them perfectly honest as he affirms them to be,—by pronouncing the overthrow of the Establishment "tantamount to the surrender, in its bulk and body, of the Christianity of our nation."—Mr. Gladstone, while he assigns reasons for not anticipating, with some, atrocities like those of the French revolution, vaticinates results if possible still more fearful, because more deliberately brought about, and permanently settled down, in all their moral dreariness, by the perversion of unprincipled intellect. His auguries are dreadful:—"We may, therefore, more probably anticipate, that the next attempt to constitute society without a God"—(so he designates the attempt to separate the state from the church)—"and to erase his name from the world which his might and his beneficence have framed, will be more crafty and considerate, requiring time for its development, and a preparation consisting, not merely, like that of France, of suffering to

exacerbate the heart, but embracing a thorough education of the understanding and expansion of its powers, and a circuitous, perhaps, but real application of them to the suppression of the best human sympathies, and the exhaustion of all the noble fountains of thought, emotion, and, above all, affection, within us. Whenever, upon this or any other basis, a complete structure of hardened selfishness shall have been erected, to be the universal type of human character, it may be that the day will have arrived for a tempest of woe and awful desolating crime, more fierce and more lasting than that under which but one generation groaned:—yet all this devilish machinery may wear a very smooth appearance, drawing upon the 'deceiveableness of unrighteousness' for all its resources of illusion, and soothing us with the belief that we are but ridding the world of bigotry and persecution, establishing human freedom, and therein rendering to God the most acceptable service, while we are in fact immolating the faith and the truth, and with them all our own hopes and destinies of good."

Now all this is not only very dismal, but in my apprehension, as coming from Mr. G., not a little surprising. In the very opening of his work, this writer thus expresses himself:—"The union is to the church a matter of secondary importance. *Her* foundations are on the holy hills. Her charter is legibly divine. She, if she should be excluded from the precinct of government, *may still fulfil all her functions, and carry them out to perfection. Her condition would be anything rather than pitiable, should*

*she once more occupy the position which she held before the reign of Constantine.*"—Mr. Gladstone's fears, then, are not for the church, but for the state. Yet, if his views of the church be correct, his fears for the state must be groundless. His fears, as we have seen, relate to the religious and moral character of the country. They are fears of prevailing impiety, and crime, and woe, and of "society without a God!" But whence these fears, if what he says be true, that, though severed from the state, the church may "*still fulfil her functions, and carry them out to perfection?*" Why is religion to cease,—why is irreligion to become universal,—why is the name of God to be erased,—if the church thus continues to "fulfil all her functions, and carry them out to perfection?" Will her spiritually leavening influence cease to operate, or operate with less efficiency and extent in the community, merely because the hypocrisy of a government-profession has been abandoned? I ask Mr. G., with all seriousness, whether it is the name or the thing, whether it is the profession or the reality of religion, that constitutes a nation's character and a nation's safety?—Whether it be the conformity of a "governing body," too often with a heartless simulation, to an outward formulary of worship, or the aggregate of genuine godliness in the community itself, that draws down on a people the blessing of Heaven, and throws around it the shield of the divine protection? If the church, then, continues to fulfil her functions, why should he fear for the state? If the real religion of the community does not suffer, the state

cannot surely be the worse, in character, in stability, in the blessing of the God of nations, for having only laid aside its hypocrisy:—for having ceased to meddle with what God in his word has not entrusted to it; for having done the will of the "King of kings" by leaving the interests of his kingdom to himself, and to the spiritual administration to which he has been pleased to commit it. Why should the state, by acting such a part, "entail upon itself a curse?" My steadfast belief is, that, of all things the state can do, this will go farthest to ensure a blessing. "Pure religion and undefiled" would have wider prevalence, were the church, in the plenitude of her independent freedom, and the energy of her innate expansiveness, to "fulfil her functions and carry them out to perfection." This is precisely what her union with the state prevents her from doing. That union corrupts her membership, and corrupts her ministers; realizing, in her ecclesiastical constitution, the anomaly in nature, of a "fountain that sends forth at the same opening sweet water and bitter,"—and the bitter, alas! in sadly the most abundant copiousness. It will be when happily delivered from that union, and not before, that her communion will be purified, and her ministerial efficiency restored, and her liberty of action disencumbered of legal restrictions, and her combination with fellow-christians of other bodies, in the harmony of love, and the activity of zeal, facilitated; and thus, instead of the realization of such forebodings as have issued from the penetralia of the Establishment, we might expect to see an end

put to the mutual jealousies of churchman and dissenter, — jealousies springing from the feeling of superiority in the former, and the indignant scorn of such superiority in the latter,—from grievances of conscience and grievances of purse in the latter, and the arrogant disregard of such grievances in the former. We should see the law of love—the royal law—carried out into more extended practical exercise,—a law whose simple principle ought at once, in the judgment of every churchman as well as of every dissenter, to decide the controversy respecting state-provision from all sects for the support of one, —"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

And what might be anticipated, as the consequences of this universal recognition of the law of love, as the principle of *religious equality?* The spirit in which this controversy has, unhappily, to too great an extent, been carried on, may, for a time, prevent the ready coalescence of parties. But the tendency will instantly begin to operate, and the result will in due time appear. There will be an extended cooperation of Christians, upon right principles; and different bodies of believers, conscientiously holding their respective tenets, will rival each other in friendly zeal for the suppression of error and the diffusion of truth. Error will be assailed by the only legitimate weapons of the christian warfare,—those taken from the spiritual armoury of God,—"not carnal, but mighty through him." It will no longer be proscribed and persecuted into notoriety, enriched by confiscation, liberated and

disseminated by imprisonment; but will sink under merited neglect, or give way before the force of truth.

I have formerly stated what I conceive to be the best of all preventions of popish ascendency. It cannot gain the ascendency, when there is no ascendency to gain. *Put down* the principle of state religion, and you take the most effectual of all means to *keep down* popery. You will unbrace and paralyze, to a vast extent, its nervous energies. Should it retain energies, and put them forth, for the maintenance and promotion of its principles as a religious system, it is no more than it has a right to do; and if the means be fair by which these energies are exerted, no man, how much soever he may bewail, is entitled to complain of its success. Pardon the repetition of a sentiment, which it is most desirable that Protestants should never forget. It is the business of true protestantism,—of spiritual evangelical Christianity,—to put forth *its* energies in the way of counteraction; to ply them in every quarter, and with all assiduity:—and when the irritating, prejudicing, confirming, uniting influence of invidious distinctions, unrighteous exactions, and violations of conscience, shall have been annihilated by such enactments as shall dissolve church and state union, and throw protestantism and popery alike on their own resources, both of money and of argument,—I have no apprehension of the result. I should feel as if I were distrustful of the power of truth, and of the power of the Spirit of truth, were I to give way to desponding fears or pusillanimous

lamentations. That the truth will ultimately triumph, who will dare to doubt? At all events, let it not triumph,—or rather seem to triumph, for the triumph can never be real,—by unrighteousness. I would rather that error should triumph by fair means, than truth by foul. The question is, Are we doing our utmost for truth, by all such means as are consistent with its nature and its dignity, and with the revealed will of its Author? If the upholders of popery surpass protestants in the diligence and the skill with which they employ the legitimate means of propagating their principles, it would indeed be a hard thing that we should murmur at their success, and think of repressing by violence what we are permitting to prosper by our indiscretion or our indolence. If protestants do their duty, they have no reason to fear; if they neglect it, they have no title to expect the progress of their principles, or the prosperity of their cause.

The present (as I formerly hinted) is too much an age of light for the revival and prosperity of a system of darkness. The popery that has recently been making its appearance in the English church, is, perhaps, after all, no more than the following out of certain previously existing principles in its standards to their legitimate conclusions; and, it is to be hoped, will have no other effect than that of inspiring disgust, and so promoting dissent,—and of suggesting the inquiry, how far a church is entitled to be supported *as protestant,* that is harbouring in its bosom doctrines which have been hailed by Romanists as a near approximation to themselves,

and which is thus showing favour to the very system of which it was the supplanter and the substitute, and "building again the things which" it professed to "destroy." And, while I cannot but regard evangelical protestantism as more than a match for popery in the use of all the legitimate supports and defences of truth, I adopt, in regard to the general position of the Roman-catholic system and the papal power, the eloquent language of Hallam:—"Five centuries have now elapsed, during every one of which the authority of the Roman see has successively declined. Slowly and silently receding from their claims to temporal power, the pontiffs hardly protect their dilapidated citadel from the revolutionary concussions of modern times, the rapacity of governments, and the growing averseness to ecclesiastical influence. But if, thus bearded by unmannerly and threatening innovation, they should occasionally forget that cautious policy which necessity has prescribed, if they should attempt (an unavailing expedient!) to revive institutions which can be no longer operative, or principles that have died away, their defensive efforts will not be unnatural, nor ought to excite either indignation or alarm. A calm comprehensive study of ecclesiastical history, not in such scraps and fragments as the ordinary partizans of our ephemeral literature obtrude upon us, is perhaps the best antidote to extravagant apprehension. Those who know what Rome has once been, are best able to appreciate what she is: those who have seen the thunderbolt in the hands of the Gregorys and the Innocents,

will hardly be intimidated at the sallies of decrepitude, the impotent dart of Priam amidst the crackling ruins of Troy."

The unity of the church is a unity in Christ. All believers in Christ are one. It is a spiritual unity, —a unity of principle and affection. There may be much unity, where there is not uniformity; and there may be much uniformity, where there is little unity. Diversity of sentiment respecting some parts of the will of their common Master, has necessarily separated Christians into various denominations. But still, they are all one. It is impossible for any man on earth to become one with Christ, without becoming, in virtue of his union with him, one with all that are his; and there is no way in which he can dissolve the bond that unites him to them, but severing, through apostasy, that which unites him to Christ. It were well if Christians would bear this in mind. The remembrance of it would have a salutary influence on all their intercourse, and especially on all their controversies; for every feeling, and word, and act, that is out of harmony with love, their common Lord represents as terminating upon himself. Let Christians, then, even while they conscientiously separate, still feel themselves one. One in principle, and one in affection, let them be one, to the utmost extent that conscience will admit, in cooperation. Let every thing be removed out of the way for which the word of God is not pleaded, that tends to mar this unity, to impede this harmonious cooperation. Above all, let that unauthorized alliance of the

church with the state be broken up. On all the grounds that have been pleaded in these Lectures, let it be broken up. And especially, and primarily, on the ground of its contrariety to the constitution of the New-Testament church, as exhibited in the record of principle and practice, given by inspiration of God. Let the authority of the Apostles be admitted paramount and permanent; and the cause is settled. I recur, in conclusion, to my grand fundamental principle. I have no fear—I *dare* have no fear—of consequences, when I am satisfied of the scriptural authority of my principles. Let them be proved *unscriptural;* and I shall instantly give to the winds all reasoning on other grounds. And if, on the contrary, their scriptural authority has been successfully proved, let reasonings on other grounds against them be given to the winds by their opponents. Let Christians bring their controversies on this great question to the one and only authoritative test:—let them bring them to that test in the spirit of mutual love; for the more love the more candour, and the more candour the more agreement:—and let them bring them to that test in the spirit of "faith in God," calmly and resolutely determined, that, whatever they find there they will follow, and whatever they do not find there they will renounce,—follow fearlessly—renounce fearlessly,—in the full assurance that what has God's sanction will have God's blessing,—and that what has not his sanction and blessing can never prosper. If *this* be done, the union of the church with the state *must* be abandoned: for who pleads for it the

authority of the Apostles? Where, in their writings, is its pattern,—where its principle,—where even its anticipation, unless in the prophecies of the "mystery of iniquity,"—"Babylon the Great?" With this "mystery of iniquity" it is wrapt up, in a common doom. The one and the other belong to the same system. On all the parts of that system the doom may not light in the same manner, or with the same weight. But the system must fall. It must fall, that the church may rise. The hour that dissolves her alliance with the world will be the hour of her salvation; in which the exulting address of the evangelical prophet will again become appropriate:—"Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." It will be the dawn of millennial day. The church will be the light of the world!

Fellow-dissenters, have the views delivered in these Lectures been in accordance with your own? If they have, you will not be offended with me for urging upon you the recollection, that they involve *practical principles;* and that a practical principle is worthless, and worse than worthless, unless it is made the basis of action. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Our church friends are active on their principles. They are right. I respect them for it. Whatever may be my opinion of a man's principles, I respect the consistency that follows them out in practice. I would rather see a man a consistent churchman, than an inconsistent dissenter. Were I a churchman myself, I should

be a *high churchman*. I mean, if I were brought to the conviction that the principle of Establishments is a right principle,—that it has the sanction of divine authority,—I should be for acting it out to the full extent of its legitimate application. Could I be convinced, that the maintenance and propagation of Christianity are really the province and the incumbent duty of the state, I should unite with Dr. C. in the strongest terms of reprobation applied by him to every manifestation of stinted and reluctant niggardliness in the provision made for this great object;—because, most assuredly, on the supposition of its being a duty, there is not, among all the departments of a government's administration, one that can bear comparison with it in importance. But, for the reasons that have been assigned, I dissent from the principle of Establishments;—and being a dissenter, I am a *high dissenter*. Satisfied that my principles are those of the divine record, whose authority in all such matters I regard as exclusive and final, I wish to see them universally adopted, and brought into universal operation. I wish all my fellow-dissenters to apply themselves in earnest to their diffusion, and to the effectuation of the end towards which they are now, to so great an extent, directed, and towards which they ought to be more and more thoroughly concentrated,—the dissolution of the connexion between the church and the state. I am not one of those who think that particular existing grievances should be disregarded, and quietly submitted to, till this great master grievance shall itself have been removed; but, while

every effort is made to rid yourselves as speedily as possible of the one,—never, O never, let the other be lost sight of. Keep it before the public mind; keep it before the minds of our legislators. Let all legitimate means, ever in the spirit of the gospel and of the spiritual kingdom of which its principles are the basis, be perseveringly employed, for imparting the light which may be necessary to both;—and especially, to that portion of the community, whom, more than all others, it ought to be our sincere and earnest desire to convince and to conciliate, our fellow-christians of the established churches of our country,—the many "excellent of the earth" that are to be found in them both. They are one with us in the best and most permanent of bonds,—the bond of divine truth and divine love. Let it be our aim to induce them to bring the system with which they now stand associated to the test of the only standard of principle, the only statute-book of the kingdom of Christ. I feel the deepest and most assured and settled conviction, that if you can successfully accomplish the great object of the disseverance of the church from the state, you will be the instruments of bestowing upon her a richer boon than any it has pleased Providence to confer since the period of the Reformation; and will have done a greater service to the interests of divine truth, than, under the superintendence of its gracious Author, has been effected by his servants and people, since the same period. May I entreat you to commit and to pledge yourselves, individually and collectively, in the name of your common

Master, the divine "Captain of your salvation," to this great cause; and to go forth to the accomplishment of your end in his armour, and in his spirit, under the banner of his cross. *Sub hoc signo vincetis.* The crisis is come. No one who holds the principles we have been advocating can consistently stand neutral. Neutrality is desertion. The voice of Him to whose authority we bow, as the only Lord of the conscience, says to us emphatically, by his word, and by all the signs of the times—"HE THAT IS NOT WITH ME IS AGAINST ME!"

I have only to add, that I thank you most sincerely and heartily for the kind and patient indulgence with which you have listened to these lectures; and that if they shall contribute, in even the very slightest degree, towards the attainment of the desired consummation, — whether by imparting a fresh stimulus to the zeal of those who agree with me, or by convincing a single influential mind among those who differ from me,—this will be the best and highest compensation for the time and labour which have been bestowed on their preparation.

THE END.

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